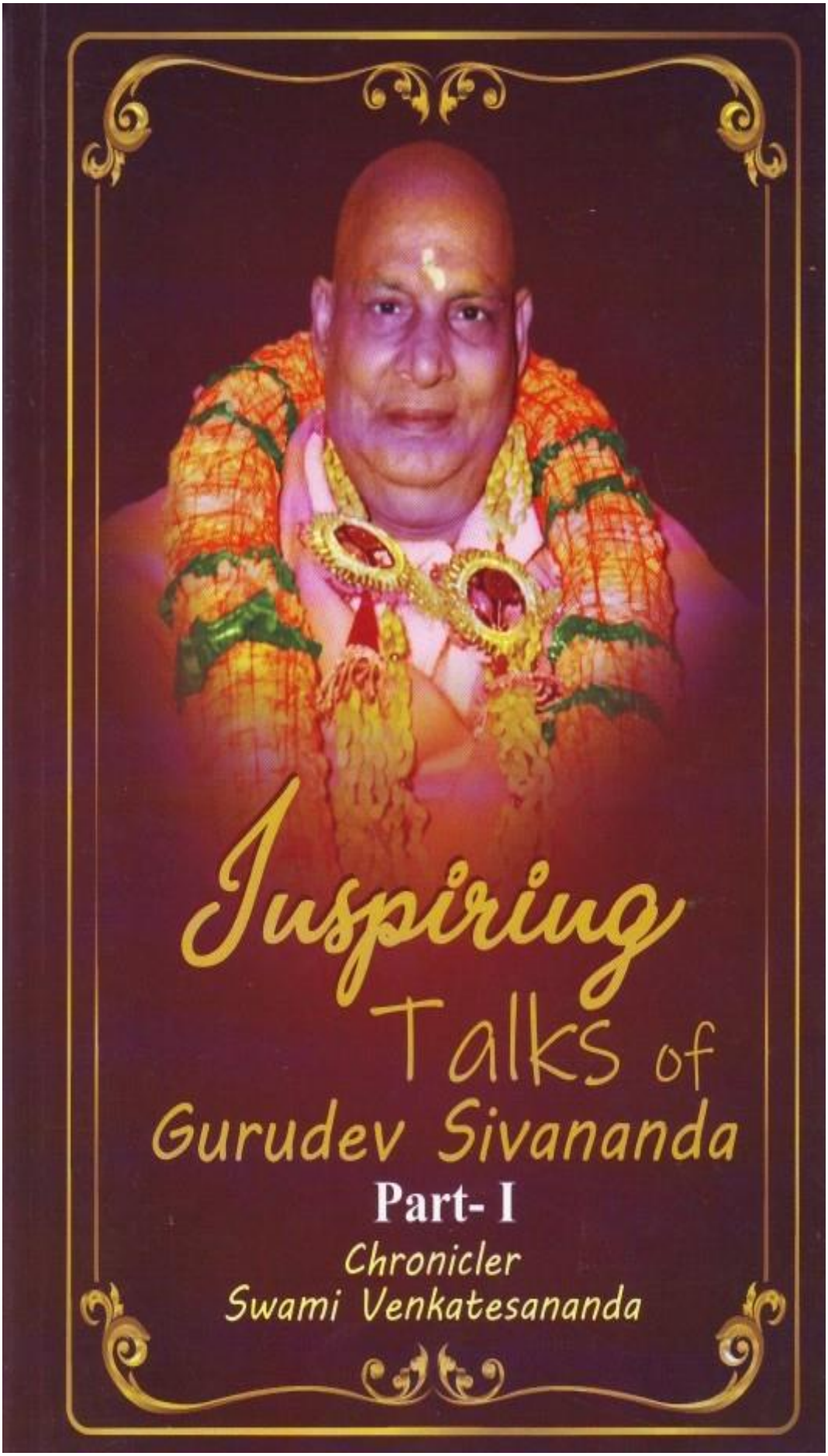
Inspiring
Talks of
Gurudev Sivananda
Part- I
Chronicler
Swami Venkatesananda

Inspiring

TALKS

OF

GURUDEV SIVANANDA

Chronicler

SIVA-PADA-RENU

SWAMI VENKATESANANDA

(PART-1)

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

We are immensely delighted to offer the second edition of 'INSPIRING TALKS OF GURUDEV SIVANANDA' to the devotees and disciples of the Holy Master.

'Inspiring Talks of Gurudev Sivananda' is a beautiful chronicle by Revered Sri Swami Venkatesanandaji Maharaj who had the blessed privilege of sitting at the sacred feet of Sri Gurudev and listening to every word and watching every action of Beloved Master. Sri Swamiji Maharaj has recorded his observations of two years from March 1948 to July 1950 and presented them chronologically in his book. Sri Swamiji's unique and inimitable style of narration makes the reader feel as if he himself is sitting at the lotus feet of Sri Gurudev at Ananda Kutir and listening to his nectarine words.

This inspiring book is being published in two parts and is being released on the joyous occasion of Birth Centenary Year of Sri Swami Venkatesanandaji Maharaj.

We sincerely hope that 'Inspiring Talks of Gurudev Sivananda' will prove a treasure worthy to be possessed and studied constantly by one and all.

-The Divine Life Society

A FOUNTAIN OF SIVANANDA YOGA

FROM SIVANANDA JNANA-GANGOTRI*

A day with Gurudev Sivananda is better spent than a year in the study of scriptures or a life-time in a library. A word-always appropriate to the occasion, and to the person addressed-a look, a smile, an action seemingly trivial-all these are (and only they truly are) 'Living Scriptures'. The inner truth which scriptures often hide from the gaze of the immature, the easy path to God-realisation which the complicated mind of the 'modern man' fails to see, the fountain of wisdom which the educated man's vision, blinded by the cataract of faithlessness, fails to perceive-are revealed like the apple on one's palm, by a simple word from the Sacred Lips.

For a period of just over two years, Gurudev had granted me the boon of gathering these pearls of wisdom, as they fell from his lips. Those were the years of hectic divine life activity at the Ashram too. They were the years during which the Ashram and the Divine Life Society had just emerged from their 'teething troubles' and the Mission began to take shape. Gurudev's pronouncements of this period, therefore, assume the importance of a divine gospel. With open eyes and ears and with the mouth shut,-Oh, it was a joy, a privilege, an unrivalled education to hear him, to hear more, and to hear nothing else. One who heard him, one who saw him, one who had spent an hour with him, would exclaim with Sage Alavandar

Tava-amritasyandiniPada Pankaje,

Niveshitaatmaa Katham-anyadichchati;

Sthitheravinde Makarandanirbhare,

Madhuvrato Nekshurakam Hi Veekshate.

(How shall my mind, which has entered the sweet arbour of thy lotus feet, wish for anything else?)

I offer that undiluted nectar at the feet of my Gurudev, enshrined in the heart of millions of seekers after Truth, all over the world. I have in my own humble capacity endeavoured to give the reader a pen-picture of the setting: in order that he may live at Gurudev's feet' while reading these talks. Cold print misses something very vital-the gestures, etc., which often convey a lot. In such instances, I have taken the liberty of explaining a Talk. To those who have had his Darshan, this will call up the indelible picture of Ananda Kutir: if you have not yet had that good fortune, please have it now. Words cannot equal the Presence!

These inspiring talks have been recorded then and there, and published now as they were recorded, chronologically. They are not to be read as a textbook is read: but they are to be resorted to as a fountain-to quench the spiritual thirst. Any page and every page is laden with inspiration: and the usual 'contents' have been omitted in this volume, as it was felt that that would be confusing and cumbersome.

May Sri Gurudev live for ever and guide us along the path of divine life!

VENKATESANANDA

ॐ नमः शिवानन्दाय

Inspiring

TALKS

Of

Gurudev Sivananda

ॐ सह नाववतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।

तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।।२ ।।

Note

IN THIS VOLUME "SIVA" REFERS TO

"SWAMI SIVANANDA"

MARCH TO AUGUST, 1948

25th MARCH, 1948

LOVE OF NATION: FIRST STEP TO LOVE OF GOD.

It was a lovely evening. The sun was lingering over the Western hills to catch a glimpse of an epoch-making event.

Dr. K. N. Gairola, Health Minister of the Tehri-Garhwal State was addressing a mammoth gathering on the Ganges bank. The local municipality had erected a flag-staff just in front of the Ashram and had invited the Minister to hoist the National Flag. Even during the course of his inevitable political speech, Dr. Gairola made touching references to Siva, to the glory that the presence of saints like Siva brought to the entire State, and the profound spiritual influence that Siva exerted on the people. Even as he concluded his speech, Dr. Gairola requested Siva to give them his Upadesh.

As the flag went up, Siva roared OM OM OM. The entire gathering joined him and it looked as though the powerful current of the Pranava-chanting raised the flag up!

'Vande Mataram, Vande Mataram, Vande Mataram

Jai Hind Jai Hind Jai Hind Jai Hind Jai Jai Jai Jai Hind'

Sang Siva and the multitude echoed his Kirtan. Siva has a Kirtan for every occasion!

'Glory to Mother India! No other nation in the world has produced such heroes. No other nation in the world can claim to have given birth to illustrious saints and sages. No other nation in the world has had among her children mighty intellectuals and great mystics who could rise to great spiritual heights, who could display such

intuitive wisdom and who could leave as a rich heritage unsurpassed philosophical treatises. No philosopher in any other land has been able to solve the riddle of creation, the mystery of birth and death and the problem of life itself as effectively as the sages of India have done.

'Such a spiritually mighty nation has achieved her political independence also in an unprecedented manner. Thanks to the Apostle of Ahimsa, Mahatma Gandhiji, India has conclusively proved to humanity that there is indescribable Shakti in non-violence. Gandhiji has demonstrated to the world that love is power; that love conquers. Such a demonstration of spiritual power would not have been possible in any other nation in the world. The national leaders in the West must now sit up and think; they must learn the lesson of non-violence; they must abandon, at once, violence in all its forms. The path of violence leads to destruction; the path of love leads to peace, plenty and prosperity.

'Our national leaders are all the trusted lieutenants of Gandhiji. They have sacrificed their all in the cause of the liberation of the motherland. Even though they have not embraced Sannyasa formally, they are true Sannyasins at heart.

'Patriotism is the first step to universalism. Love of one's own nation in time leads to cosmic love or the love of God. The main thing is to crush the low, mean-minded selfishness. A selfless servant of the nation will soon become a selfless servant of humanity; he will soon transcend his individual ego and realise God.'

Then Siva sang the Maha Mantra Kirtan. He thanked Dr. Gairola for giving him this opportunity of singing the Lord's Name. Siva showered his blessings on the Minister: 'May Lord bless Dr. Gairola and the other Ministers with health, long life, peace,

prosperity and Kaivalya Moksha! May God bless you all?' After chanting the Shanti Path, Siva resumed his seat.

Padmanabhan was all the time busy on the roof of neighbouring buildings 'shooting' the whole proceedings with his movie camera.

Siva then led the Minister to the Ashram where the Ministerial party was entertained to tea.

28th MARCH, 1948

MIRA BEHN AND SADHU ORGANISATION

'Om Namo Narayanaya! I am grateful to you for coming. Are you all right?' enquired Siva affectionately as Kumari Mira Behn came up the Ashram steps on the Ganges bank.

For over half an hour, Mira Behn discussed with Siva her Pashulok scheme and the object with which she started it. She also acquainted Siva with the views of Mahatma Gandhiji on the position of Sadhus in Indian society. She thought that there was a lot of work that should be done among Sadhus to organise them so that they could become an integral and useful part of the society. She asked for Siva's blessings and for his moral support to her plans for organising the Sadhus of Rishikesh.

Mira Behn is a close follower of Mahatma Gandhiji to whose mission she has dedicated her life.

THE ALL-PERVADING SIVA!

'Wherever I have been, Swamiji, I have found that your name and your soul-elevating writings have gone ahead of me!' said Goswami Ganesh Duttji, a well-renowned public benefactor of Punjab. Sri Goswamiji had come to pay his respects to Siva whom he has known for a long time. The object of his visit was to discuss with Siva the question of Sadhu Seva (Sadhu reform).

24th APRIL, 1948

VAIRAGYA

'Constant reflection on the great utterances of the Great,

सर्व दुखं विवेकिनः

and developing Mithya-drishti or Dosha-Drishti in relation to the objects of the world through discriminative thinking these will help you to develop true Vairagya,' said Siva when Sri Jayadayal Goenka of the Gita Press, Gorakhpur, sought Siva's Darshan today.

As soon as Sri Jayadayalji came in, Siva noticed a wound on his foot, immediately got the necessary dressing from the dispensary and applied the bandage.

There they were-Sri Jayadayalji and his party in Siva's Kutir on the lap of the Ganga-listening to Siva's words of wisdom on Bhakti, Yoga, Jnana and Vairagya.

A member of Sri Jayadayalji's party gave expression to his admiration of Siva's work and added that the excellently got-up Diamond Jubilee Commemoration Volume had enabled Siva's message to spread far and wide. This led to a discussion of Guru-worship, and Siva said:

'Some say that we should not worship a living saint. But, the wise say that whereas no one needs be fanatical in his desire to celebrate the Jayanthi of any saint, he need not go to the other extreme, either. Those who like to celebrate, let them. It ill-behoves a Sannyasin or saint who has gone above likes and dislikes, to abhor the idea of such celebration. Vairagya-Abhimana is as dangerous as Abhimana for worldly possessions.

'Worship of saints has been taken more or less as a necessary Sadhana in the life of an aspirant in India. Even the Upanishads

declare that a Sadhaka should have the same devotion to his Guru as he has to God. The idea is that by constantly thinking of his Guru, the Sadhaka is kept on the right path away from evil, and moulds himself on the pattern of his teacher.

Thus even a third-class teacher is fit to be worshipped by the fifth-class aspirant! The latter is sure to be benefited.

'When a Sadhaka superimposes on his personal Guru the characteristics of the Impersonal Absolute-as in the case of idol-worship-the Sadhaka's devotion reaches the Supreme! God, the Indweller knows the Sadhaka's devotion and guides him along the proper path.

'Even wise men sometimes lack this broader outlook and argue that the human figure of a saint should not be adored with devotion due to God! As with God, so with Guru-the way to the Impersonal lies through the personal.'

25th APRIL, 1948

MONSIEUR BOGROFF OVER-POWERED BY LOVE

'A Guru is necessary. But you must first prepare the ground for the reception of the seed of knowledge from the Guru. He cannot do this for you. Simple living, simple food, simple clothing, aversion to sensual pleasures, speaking the truth, developing a heart of love, continence, endurance, self-control-all these you will have to develop.

You should have a keen longing to meet a Guru and be initiated by him. Then God Himself will provide a Guru for you. Good books written by realised Yogis who have trodden the path will greatly help you. Mere talking will not do. You must practise!' thundered Siva, as Mon. Bogroff listened spell-bound.

Mon. Bogroff, a Russian businessman in France, was on a flying visit to Ananda Kutir, prompted to see Siva, by one of Siva's

admirers in Delhi-Sri B. L. Nehru. He came in to say 'How do you do?' but stayed most part of the day under the spell of Siva's love.

Bogroff admitted that Indian Yoga largely meant to the French either black magic or tall talk! And, he felt that Siva's message of practical synthetic Yoga Self-realisation was badly needed by the West.

Bogroff told Siva that he was interested in Raja Yoga and requested Siva to select a place for him where he could practise. Siva said: 'Any cool place will suit you. You can go to Uttara Brindawan to Sri Krishna Prem (Mr. Nixon)', and then briefly described the glory of Sri Krishna Prem and gave his address also. And, quietly Siva autographed a copy of 'Sayings' and handed it to Bogroff. The latter took leave of Siva with perceptibly great reluctance; took a number of snaps of Siva; took a number of Siva's books; and took, most of all, Siva's potent blessings.

IT IS OUR OWN HOME

'Do not feel shy. Be quite at home in this Ashram. It is our own home.' Thus instructed Sri Rao Saheb A.V. Raman of the Government of India when his young daughter was pondering over the acceptance of the proffered cup of coffee. He had lost his heart to Siva even on his first visit to the Ashram last year on his way to Badrinath.

I AM THOU

With Sri Raman, Siva was long conversing on Delhi affairs rejoining here and there with his own practical philosophy.

A youth who had accompanied Sri Raman found Siva lending an ear to his eloquence on the general principles of office organisation and organisation of squadrons and air force ranks. In

this youth's opinion, the huge organisation of the Divine Life Society deserved to be a directorate with Siva as two-thousand rupee Director! A hearty laugh of encouragement from the Director of the Universe whose salary is the wealth of the world!

Sri Annapurna's mouth was watering as Siva the 'mountain recluse' was recalling to her some of the delicacies served in costly urban hotels. To her discomfiture, Siva knew more of the culinary art than she herself knew!

Srimathi Liliane sits there entranced as the dexterous fingers of Siva play the keys of her piano. This simple looking Sannyasin long secluded from urban life, knows this, too!'

Siva's divine eye pierces into the very soul of every one and he at once finds out the other man's interest'. Conquest of hearts is then child's play.

28th APRIL, 1948

TO FOLLOW AND TO ADORE

What a flower of devotion-this Sri C. Alavandariah! Guru Siva is verily God unto him. He has known Siva from the latter's Swarg Ashram days.

Sri Alavandariah and I went to Siva's Kutir at about 8 a.m. and sat outside the Kutir, meditating on the lotus feet of Siva. What bliss, what peace pervades the entire atmosphere! No wonder: we were even physically so near the omnipotent dynamo. Time sped.

Siva came out of the Kutir punctually at 8 a.m., as previously arranged. Sri Alavandariah had with him four pieces of white silk, and a Gerua-Tiruman paste. (Tiruman is a kind of plaster of Paris used by Vaishnavites to put on their caste-mark. Gerua is the ochre powder.)

Siva then seated himself on a chair outside his Kutir. A small wooden plank was placed just near his feet. Over this were spread one small four-folded blanket and a small piece of cloth-to serve as padding.

With indescribable, but visible joy, Sri Alavandariah smeared the gerua paste on the soles of Siva's lotus-feet, as Siva sat diving deep within and bringing up his real Swarupa.

Then, Siva placed his feet squarely on the silk cloth spread over the padding and stood up, uttering 'Sivoham: Sachchidananda Swaroopoham'. He then reclined in his chair again as we were busy removing the silk cloth with the precious, divine impression of Siva's lotus feet (indeed so even by their appearance on the cloth) and applying the gerua paste again, for the next impression.

When the four prints had been taken, Siva enquired in his own child-like simplicity: 'What will you do with these?' Even a trace of Gurudom was absent: and I felt that he had lost all identity with the foot-prints which he deemed to be 'Sivananda's'.

Alavandariah explained: 'Swamiji, Vaishnavites revere this greatly. They take the foot-prints of their Acharyas and worship them as the very Lotus Feet of the Acharyas themselves. Then the devotees place these foot-prints on their head and do their Japa or Dhyana. They derive wonderful benefits by this practice. They get concentration of mind more easily; their thoughts are noble, pure and sublime.

'Especially, Swamiji, when the footprints are those of a living sage like you, the effect is bound to be miraculous. Even when I touch these foot-prints, I am transported to realms of peace and joy. The moment we press these footprints to our eyes or place them on our head, or worship them, we are bound to feel your divine spirit working within us, and the yearning will be

awakened in us to follow thy footsteps. Only, I need your blessings.'

SIVA WORKS THROUGH MANY

Srimathi.. (a Punjabi lady) who had migrated into India on account of disturbances in Pakistan, recollected the work she had been able to do in Pakistan before the riots, under the auspices of the Divine Life Society. All this she had to discontinue. All the materials had to be left behind in Pakistan. Siva at once said: 'Start your work afresh in Dehra Dun.' She replied: Yes, Swamiji, I must do some work. Your spirit, a spark of which works in me does not allow me to remain idle even for a day. I want to do some work at Dehra Dun also. But, before the start is made, I want your blessings.' When she got this, she took the dust of Siva's feet with reverence and left with the great joy of satisfaction at heart.

2nd MAY, 1948

THE BUTTER OF ATMA

I am glad you take so much interest in agriculture and dairy-farming. They are very essential for maintaining the health of every man in India. But there is another, a supreme type of butter, a knowledge of which is essential for every man, especially in India. That butter is that of Atma! Do you know how to churn the Koshas and take the butter of Atma?' said Siva, when Sri Ramdas (M.Sc. in Agriculture) informed Siva of his forthcoming visit to the U.S.A. for prosecuting his studies in agriculture and dairy-farming.

'Swamiji, I have not even heard of this churning and how to obtain this butter of Atma. Please let me know the process.'

You have to go to the Forest University to obtain knowledge of this butter. The five sheaths of the body represent the vessel that

holds curd. OM is the churning rod. Practise meditation on OM with Brahma Bhavana. You will soon get the butter of Atma which will make you immortal and ever blissful.' The scientist said: Thank you very much, Swamiji, you have really opened my eyes now. I shall practise this spiritual churning to eat the butter of Atma and become immortal.'

CLEANSE THE MIND

Sri H. Ram Ram Ram D.Sc. (Botany) had just returned from America after getting his D.Sc. at an American University. He elaborately described the glories of life in America.

Siva quietly remarked: 'You must be tired after such a long journey. Throw off your 'America', the suit and your D.Sc. and then, take a bath in the Ganga and attend the worship at Viswanath Mandir.'

He was a bit surprised and asked: 'Swamiji! How to remove America? I can very well remove my suit.'

Siva then explained: 'Remove American habits and thoughts of America and the D.Sc. Abhimana which is more dangerous. Forget about the glamour of America; give up this D.Sc. Abhimana.'

He laughed heartily and resolved: 'I shall try to remove these two. But it is rather difficult, for they are ingrained in me for a very long time.'

5th MAY, 1948

REAL KARMA YOGA

'In youth itself, man should try to lead a simple life, to repeat God's name, to practise Yoga, to do Vichara, to study Gita and other scriptures, to control the Indriyas. Singing Kirtan and Japa

of Naam will bestow perennial joy and supreme inner peace on you; but you can realise this only if you practise.

'Yet, youth will not hear! Only when man gets knocks and blows in the daily battle of life, will he turn to God, why not thank God for His mercies and adore him in every form? 'Do selfless service....'

'Yes, Swamiji, we are in a way doing this. We earn money; we work and support the family. So, we are all Karma Yogins.'

This is a serious mistake. What do people know about the secret and technique of Karma Yoga? They are attached to their families; they waste their lives on earning for the sake of their bellies, and imagine that they are doing Karma Yoga. What do they know of Karma Yoga? Karma Yoga is different. You should give up Abhimana. You should renounce Kartritwa and Bhoktritwa: you should identify yourself with the Atman.

'Even a little of this selfless service imperfectly done is good. It will purify you. Combine this with Japa, Kirtan, Dhyana. Then you will realise the Bliss.

'Next time, come here and stay at least for a week. Then you will have ample opportunities for doing intense Sadhana.'

The above conversation between Siva and an American businessman is revealing.

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Dr. Sri Pattawardhan, Ph.D. (Chemistry) of Roorkee came to have Swamiji's Darshan. Swamiji remarked: 'Dr. Saheb, everybody wants to become a Ph.D. or D.Litt., or I.C.S., or M.B.B.S., or Bar-at-Law: no one wants to know the nature of the Atma! The play of Maya, and the Gunas; what happiness is; what the mind is; what the relation between man and Brahman is; how to get eternal bliss; how to free oneself from bondage. He does not

believe in the life everlasting, beyond the senses, in transcendental matters. Everybody wants to have wife, some children, bungalows, gardens, a car and money in the bank. His mental current naturally flows towards objects. He is not able to believe that the repetition of Naam can produce joy and inner peace."

'I suppose there is a period of life for such beliefs and practices, Swamiji.'

This is the best period-youth. What will you do in old age? You will be deaf, how can the sound of Lord's name enter your ears: how can you enjoy Kirtans or Kathas? You will not be able to see; how can you read holy books like the Gita and other scriptures? You will not be able to sit at a place and do Japa; you will not be able to control the Indriyas; Sadhana will be impossible. You will waste all your life in useless pursuits and turn when it is too late to the proper path.'

The Doctor asked: 'Swamiji, if all become Sannyasins, what will become of this world?'

Siva replied: "This can never be. Why do you bother about this? Your mind tricks and wants to dupe you. The Omnipotent Lord will create another batch of people in a minute. Mind your business! Enquire and remove your ignorance.'

The Doctor became silent. He was convinced.

17th MAY, 1948

SIVANANDA MEETS SIVANANDA

'OM Namo Narayanaya, Swamiji Maharaj!' so saying, Siva swept into the room in Ramashram, and before those gathered could realise what was happening, had stretched himself on the ground at the feet of Swami Sivanandaji of Mukti Dham: Siva not only

said but actually meant the OM Namo Narayanaya with tears in his eyes. The two Sivanandas exchanged greetings.

This Swami was an old Sannyasin, aged 82, more than half of this span spent as a monk. When two worldly men meet after a long separation, they start talking of the clubs, theatres and races they used to visit together, and the picnics they had arranged, etc. God help those who witness this scene! They will be bored. Blessed were the souls who were present at the meeting of these two saints.

Siva served the Swami nicely with fruits and Lussi (sweet buttermilk), and all the while both of them exchanged views on Dharma, the necessity for everyone following the tenets of the Sastras, and the value of elders' blessings in the life of every man. To the eager listener, the Swami then described in detail the growth of Rishikesh during the past half a century. By his child-like attitude, and his deep reverence towards this Swami, Siva set an example to all Sadhakas. True meaning of Narayana Bhava was also vividly portrayed in Siva's behaviour towards the Swami. Siva then gave a hearty send off to the learned Swami Sivananda.

18th MAY, 1948

A MILLIONAIRE'S DAUGHTER BREAKS STONES WITH SIVA

We have already seen several times how Siva insists on the need for one and all engaging himself in selfless service. Siva has always said that an aspirant should be prepared to be a coolie and a scavenger, as much as to be a king and emperor. He himself sets an example to others in this respect. We have seen how he inspires high officials and rich businessmen to carry baskets on their head by his own behaviour.

No one is spared! Young daughter of a Jewish millionaire-Ms. Annabella-and her mother-Srimathi Liliane Shamash were strolling along with Siva near the Yagnashala. Without a moment's premeditation, Siva mingled with the labourers there and started breaking the stones. A broad, winning smile, and a characteristic 'Hum"! He invited the two ladies to join him in the task. Soft hands began breaking hard stones.

Swish! A small pebble had flown into Srimathi Liliane's nose. Before she could even realise what had happened, she sneezed and the pebble was out without any injury to the nose. Of course, with Siva nearby, no harm could befall his devotees.

19th MAY, 1948

WELL DONE, SWAMIJI

Swami Satchidanandaji, an old Sannyasin who was staying in the Ashram entered the office, bowed to Siva and sat on the bench contemplating with joy Siva's countenance full of peace and bliss.

Sri Gopala Iyer entered and exhibited to Siva several clippings from the newspapers containing his contributions on the results of his researches into the sacred epics of the land. Surely, a lifetime's labour would evoke great enthusiasm and approbation from Siva!

Sri Gopala Iyer, too, sat beside Sri Satchidanandaji having nothing else to do (Siva had, by now, diverted his attention to his letters). He picked up a conversation with his bench-mate. Polite words, courtesy, arguments, slightly heated debate-and the mercury in the 'egometer' was rising high! Satchidanandaji was trying in vain to impress on the pundit that Advaita was not to be trifled with; that those who went mad, if milk did not reach them in time for their morning coffee, should not poo-pooh Puranas, divinities and saints. This touched the pundit's delicate chords and he burst out almost calling the Swami names, characterising him

as pseudo-Sannyasin, a mere flesh clothed in gerua, a waster of life etc.

A sudden mellowing, and Satchidanandaji gave a welcome twist to the dissension. 'Maharaj! My knowledge is very poor. I have not touched the fringe of the ocean of knowledge in which you ever swim. I am as yet a student; you are advanced. I beg your pardon for arguing with you.' This silenced the pundit who went out with the head held erect, with egoism.

Siva smiled to Satchidanandaji and said: 'Very good reply!'

Who can doubt that Siva, seeing the heated debaters advancing towards each other, sent out his thought-current transforming Satchidanandaji, and used him as his medium to convey his own peculiar message of humble indifference to humbug!

25th MAY, 1948

MY ONLY SAGE

'No, Swamiji! I will not take Sannyasa from anyone else. I consider that you are the only real sage today, by whose initiation alone I will derive great benefit. I do not consider anyone else can even approach your Holiness in greatness.' Thus said a Bengali gentleman, a candidate for Sannyasa. He had already come to the Ashram several times previously and requested Siva to initiate him into Sannyasa. Once he came to the Ashram, changed his mind and went to another Ashram in Rishikesh. The above was in reply to Siva's humourous suggestion that he might take Sannyasa from some other Mahatma!

YOU ARE A MILLIONAIRE

The topic changed. And, before taking leave of Siva, the Bengali gentleman wanted to get some money from Siva. Half-humorously and half-seriously, Siva remarked that there was paucity of funds in the Society; and that it would gratefully accept

donations, however small from the visitor himself! Astonished, the visitor revealed: 'Swamiji, they say in Rishikesh that you are a millionaire!'

Yes: Siva is a millionaire, the king of kings, whose treasury consists of every one's purse and Kuber's wealth! But, that, the visitor did not know.

26th MAY, 1948

STRANGE BLESSING

Sri Natarajan had come from South India on a fund collection mission on behalf of Akhilandeswari Temple. They had found it difficult to carry on the work-Pancha Prakara Utsavam-which was being done by his father. He had come to Delhi for the purpose of collecting funds. He did not meet with the success he expected to achieve. He requested Siva to bless him for success in the undertaking.

Siva was silent for a while, watching the two, one would have gathered the impression that Siva was unmindful of the visitor's plea. He was listening all the while, besides doing his own work!

The pen was put away!

'Do some Anushthana. This sort of running about for money is no good. By sheer Adhyatmic power, you must invoke God's grace and you will get what you need. Money will come to you. You need not run after money. Reduce the food expenses in connection with the function. What money is collected, you must try to utilise it for cultural purposes. Food will only create more quarrels and unnecessary crowd.

'Start a Sanskrit college. Bring out translations of the Vedas and Upanishads. Then people will be benefited; they will appreciate your work and money will pour in. Study the working of such

colleges elsewhere. Take suggestions from Sri S. V. Iyer of Chingleput-he has organised a Sevashram there.

That is the way to work. Then people will come to know of your spirit of service and will themselves come forward to help. No one nowadays will give you charity for the sake of feeding!'

'Swamiji! Food is also necessary, isn't it?'

'Yes, that also. But the main thing is cultural service.'

'Annadana first and....'

'No,no! Jnana-dana first and Annadana next. You can give a man food-in a few hours he is hungry again. Further, if you don't satisfy him and feed him according to his likes, he will abuse you.'

Sri Natarajan actually experienced the truth of this saying he kept still for a long time trying to digest the food-for-thought Siva had given him.

28th MAY, 1948

THE MONTESSORI-ADVOCATE

Sri Krishnamurthy and Mr. Lilly Felt arrived at Ananda Kutir with a letter of introduction from Sri Swami Nityananda Kaveeshwar and Sister Lalitha of Tapas Ashram. Sri Krishnamurthy and his companion belonged to the Inner Circle of the Theosophical Society at Madras and friends of Sri Henry van Zeyst, a disciple of Siva. They were on their way to Badrinath.

Siva received them in his own way, with divine cordial greetings. Quickly, he found out that Sri Krishnamurthy was interested in Montessori system of education. During the evening Satsang, Siva initiated a lively discussion on the Montessori system of

education during which Sri Krishnamurthy gave a short talk on the system. Incidentally, it is noteworthy how Siva gives everyone his place of importance at Ananda Kutir. There is neither superiority nor inferiority complex there. Everyone is received in brotherly love; and anyone who has acquired knowledge in any branch of learning has an opportunity to share it with others. Even if the visitor is shy, Siva would insist on his delivering a lecture. And, Siva himself would be the first and foremost student and listener!

BUDDING RAVI VARMA LAUDED

Here comes one of free India's legislators, Sri Mohanlal Saxena, M.L.A. (Central) with his wife and son. They received a hearty welcome and were entertained by Siva himself. The couple was pious and devoted. They listened enraptured to Siva's discourse on Yoga. Young Nanda Kumar, however, found in Siva an object for his pen. Quickly, he sketched Siva's bust! Siva was all-appreciation of this young boy's art and awarded him the First Prize for proficiency in drawing. Siva also awarded the title of 'Chitra Kala Kushala' on the young artist.

30th MAY, 1948

SECRET OF KARMA YOGA

Prasad distribution is a spiritual Sadhana. He who distributes Prasad should be a good Karma Yogi. There may be some important persons who will go away immediately after the function is over. They will not wait for Prasad distribution. You must serve them first. Others can wait. You should always use the power of discrimination.

After the opening ceremony of the Diamond Jubilee Hall extension had concluded, Siva chastised the Prasad distributon, 'you gave so little to Punditji!'

'Swamiji, we prepared only very little. We did not expect there will be such a big gathering."

'Every function is holy. Even the opening of an office hall is an occasion for all to do Kirtan and have Satsang. All should be invited and served.'

'Hereafter we shall do so, Swamiji."

'And, even if there is only a little Prasad and a big gathering, you should first serve the visitors and we shall share what remains. That is the spirit of Karma Yoga. Have you now understood?'

UPADSEHA AT EVERY TURN

'You want my autograph? Come, why hesitate?' relieved Siva, Srimathi Kamala Tuli's embarrassed silence.

Astonished, Srimathi Kamala merely smiled and nodded 'Yes'.

First, I thought that the thing in your hand was a money-bag: but when I noticed your embarrassment, I found out it was an autograph book. Give it to me.'

When the book was handed to him, Siva looked at it this way and that with the admiration of a child. 'It is so nice. Very good! But there are no autographs in it!'

'Swamiji, I wanted the book to be opened by you.'

Quietly Siva wrote:

Srimathi Kamala Tuli

Serve. Love. Give. Do Kirtan. Do Japa. Control anger through patience and forgiveness. See God everywhere. Meditate. Realise God. May you shine like Mira, Radha, Sita! May Lord bless you with health, long life, peace, prosperity and Kaivalya. Sivananda

A full-page Upadesha in answer to a devotee's prayer for a simple autograph. Anyone else would have often refused so much as a

signature. For Siva, every opportunity for disseminating spiritual knowledge should be utilised.

31st MAY, 1948

'It is a miracle how they have all been saved. Even a sight of the wreckage is sufficient to turn one mad! The very thought of the accident was enough to kill the passengers. They were saved only through Lord Viswanath's grace. Instead of meeting with the accident in the middle of a jungle where there would have been little chance of being saved, they were all brought to the feet of Lord Viswanath where they could get immediate treatment, tea, sherbat and all comforts!' Siva thus extolled the grace and power of Lord Viswanath, as the victims of a nasty bus accident just adjacent to the Ashram dispensary were being treated zealously by the inmates of the Ashram.

I was wondering within myself to whom this miraculous help should be attributed.

Surely, to Siva whose very life-breath is selfless service and who is the supreme saviour. But, then Siva is SIVA and the two are one.

2nd JUNE, 1948

LOSS OR GAIN?

'What are six hundred rupees before the evolution of one single individual soul? I shall not be sorry if the consignee does not a even pay pie for the six-hundred-rupee-worth of books we sent him. What will he do with the books? They are not eatables. He might sell them at one anna per copy at the Moore Market or even give them free. In any case, they will go round. At least one man's eyes will be opened and he will begin to do Japa. I am satisfied. God will give us money when He thinks fit. Why should we consider this a loss?' said Siva when the case of a book-seller

(without a shop) who had taken out a consignment of Siva's books worth Rs. 600 had not even intimated his whereabouts to the Society for years.

POLISHED CHEAT

When the news was broken to him, Siva, between winks and a sarcastic smile, said: 'So, you have all been deceived by this polished cheat. It is a wonder how you entrusted such a large consignment to a stranger!'

'Swamiji, before that he had purchased books worth Rs. 20.

'Yes, he bought books worth Rs. 20; sent you a nice letter on his beautiful big letter-head; ordered Rs. 600 worth of books and bolted! He is a polished cheat.'

Everyone laughed and said: 'Yes, Swamiji.'

There was a similar case in Singapore. A man opened a big shop; had a lady typist, big office, etc. He had a roaring business. He borrowed some money from the local people. One day he was missing with all the money. He had opened a similar shop in Saigon!'

Everyone seemed to have reconciled himself to the view that all of them (including Siva) had been deceived. All kept silent in utter shame. Siva noticed this and read our thoughts. He instantly poured forth his heart as given in the beginning and concluded 'We have not incurred any loss!' Everyone was astounded.

Beware of cheats. Do not become polished cheats. Nothing is indeed a real loss. How beautifully are these lessons taught by Siva.

And, what an untiring zeal Siva has for disseminating spiritual knowledge at any cost!

3rd JUNE, 1948

THE GURU IN ALL

'I was coming out of my Kutir. A tonga was standing on the road. A Sadhu and....a learned pundit, ...and a Bhakta were having hot words with the driver. Suddenly, the Bhakta started poking the driver's ribs with his umbrella and the Sadhu jumped into the tonga and started kicking the driver.

'Mysterious is the power of Maya. The Samskaras and Vasanas are very powerful. This Sadhu has been doing Tapasya here for at least 25 years past. He is old, learned. But, these evil traits do not leave him!

'We should learn a lesson from this and be very vigilant.' said Siva and immediately entered the office.

Do not see others' faults. But if you happen to see any, take a lesson and avoid it in yourself.

4th JUNE, 1948

THE INEXHAUSTIBLE WEALTH

'Acquire Kirtan-wealth and meditation-wealth, too. material wealth is not of much use. Law-degree-wealth and Excise-Inspectorship-wealth will disappear.' These humourous remarks from Siva's lips produced a tremor in an L.L.B. Excise Inspector's body.

Siva did not stop with that. He immediately got up and led the party into the veranda. He initiated them all into Japa and Kirtan.

'Do Japa. Do Kirtan. Lead the Divine Life. Speak the truth. Practise Ahimsa and Brahmacharya. That is the essence of all Yogas.

This is a great day for you all. On the bank of the Ganges, you all have repeated the glorious names of the Lord with faith and

devotion. Even five minutes' devout Kirtan produces lasting effects on you all! Jai Ho!'

GOD FILLS MY MONEY BAG!

The visitors offered some donation. 'Shall I receive it in my hands or in my bag?' asked Siva: all laughed. The small donation was received in the bag!

Like this, my bag gets filled. God will provide the wherewithal for carrying on His work! Jai Ho!'

Within five minutes of their stay here, these visitors had gained a life's wealth of wisdom!

I LIVE FOR THEE!

A few minutes later.....

A heart-broken man walked in. Disgusted with the world on account of a series of failures, he wanted solace. How to treat him? Is he to be turned off? No.

The pen dropped from Siva's hand. The spectacles disappeared into their case. Siva led the young man out of the office. Seated him on a bench outside. The Lord's name will dispel your gloom. Now repeat the name with me.' Siva did Kirtan with the visitor. OM chanting followed. The effect on the visitor was miraculous. He regained composure. Siva asked him to do Japa on the Ganges-bank. This is Siva's spiritual treatment; in short, treatment par excellence: a quick wartime initiation followed by lasting victory.

A EUROPEAN, TOO!

That is the best present you can give me', acknowledged Siva as Sri Milsiter laid on Siva's table a few very important bottles of drugs and a torch-light. 'Only you know what I like best! Thank you very much... (Seldom said by Siva while addressing an

Indian).. (Siva started playing with the torch.)... How nice! Very beautiful indeed!' How quickly does Siva adapt himself to all sorts of people! In a minute, he metamorphoses himself from an Indian into a European.

GLORY OF SANNYASA

Take Sannyasa. Then you will get whatever you need. That is the secret of renunciation. When you need money, you have to write to your bank. When I need it, someone comes in and offers it, with prostrations and with love and respect. Someone brings sweets. Some others bring torches, medicines, etc. Renounce all desires. Then God will ever dwell in you and take care of you.' Siva thus gave the gist of the Upanishads in a few words to Srimathi Liliane and Sri Annapurna, who were looking on with astonishment at all that was going on.

6th JUNE, 1948

VEDANTIC ETHICS

Neither want, nor give up-that must be the attitude of a Vedantin. He should not say: I have given up salt; I have given up sugar; no, not even: I have given up the world. He should be supremely indifferent. He should rest in his own Swaroopa and realise the unity of Existence. He should see Brahman alone in everything and everywhere', said Siva, when Swami a Bala Jnani, quietly placed a packet of sweetmeats (the offering of a visitor) on Siva's table and walked away. In such cases, the conveyor gets the first (and the lion's) share of the offerings: the young disciple, full of Vairagya, was reluctant to put himself in that position.

WISDOM-MOUSTACHE

Sri B. K. Desaiji slowly peeped in.

'OM Namo Narayanaya!' greeted Siva. Then turning to Sri Padmanabhan, he said: 'O Padmanabhaswami! Give him a copy

of 'Necessity for Sannyas'... (everyone looked at the two with a look of query).... Yes. He is a candidate for Guru Poornima!.... (Siva threw up a glance at Sri Desai)... You will have to shave your moustache now! But do not be sorry for that. I will replace it with the Wisdom-moustache. You will be supremely happy.'

7th JUNE, 1948

SLEEP OR SAMADHI?

Your face indicates something: sleep or Samadhi, or both? Everyone present laughed at this remark from Siva's lips. K...., a student of Raja Yoga, was walking out of the office in a dazed condition.

How often do we mistake Tamas for Sattva! How often, again, do we admire and fall at the feet of the indolent, mistaking them for saints of pure Sattva!

8th JUNE, 1948

COMFORTABLE SANNYASA

'M. wants Sannyasa!' Siva remarked as he was reading a letter from a disciple who had gone on a pilgrimage of Uttarakhand.

There was silence and no further talk. Siva left the office.

The following poem Siva brought in the afternoon, as a surprise commentary on his morning Sutra:

'Comfortable Sannyas will not help you.

Sannyas is sterner stuff.

It demands endurance, renunciation and dispassion. You have not abandoned Pan-supari,

Smoking, tea, love for crop and newspaper reading, Mixing with householders freely.

You are saturated with worldly ambitions.

People should see something of Sannyas in you.

Some kind of Sannyas aroma should waft from you.

Otherwise, what is the use of your Sannyas?

Is it for respect or receiving Namaskar?

Then, you are deceiving yourself and others, too.

Shave the mind first by destroying Vasanas and Raga Dwesha.

Give colouring to your heart, first.

This is real Sannyas.'

ANSWER? SILENCE!

Here is a pundit: good learning and old age.

'What is divine life, Swamiji?

To observe Ahimsa, Satyam and Brahmacharya. to do Japa, Meditation, Kirtan, to study Gita, Upanishads, to serve all, to love all-that is divine life.'

'How to control the wandering mind?'

'By Vairagya and Abhyasa.'

How to develop Vairagya?' Silence.

I think you are not well acquainted with Hindi, Swamiji. Shall I talk in English?'

Silence.

After the pundit had abruptly left, Siva said:

Vain discussion. He will never do anything in his life. They have studied some books. They ask some stock questions of every one they meet. They will go on asking. If we also go on replying, a

discussion will arise-heated debate-hot words-then: you are a fool, you know nothing! It is a waste of time talking to them. Do they not know the simple thing-Japa, Kirtan, Swadhyaya, God's grace, etc? They will never practise. Nor will they approach any one with Bhava.'

9th June, 1948

I AM THY SEVAK-GUIDE

Sri Harichandani had been staying in the Ashram for three or four days. He would daily come, bow to Siva and take his seat in the office. Patiently he waited. This morning, he found Siva alone and free in the office. He prostrated.

'Swamiji! I have a small doubt: I have heard of a powerful Mantra of Devi, Shodashakshari. It is reputed to fulfil one's desires quickly. May I have Upadesha of that Mantra from your holiness?'

'Please do not run after these Mantras. It is very much safer to go on with the Gayatri. It is the best of all Mantras. It will give you Moksha. Please go on repeating it.'

Yes, Swamiji. I have been repeating the Gayatri 1008 times for the last three months. But I want success in life. Will I get it from Gayatri?'

'Do not expect to have this or that good fortune from Japa. Do it with Nishkamya Bhava. You will get everything. You expect to get a money-order every day.'

Sri H. was surprised to receive this answer.

'How long have you to study for getting a matriculation certificate?'

Ten years, Swamiji.'

'How much longer should you practise Japa for getting the Lord's Infinite grace? Go on repeating the Gayatri all your life. Do not expect anything out of it. You will get everything!'

What a contrast with yesterday's conversation!

Siva knows our heart. His response depends on our Bhava.

9th JUNE, 1948

INDRA SABHA

This is like sitting in the Indra Sabha, Swamiji. I am very happy to be in it. Kirtan, sweetly sung by several inmates and visitors, with Harishji playing on the violin, that devotee of Sri Vishnu Digambar singing inspiring Bhajans, Narayanaswamiji reading Gita and Upanishads, Sri Shamash's children very melodiously singing the Lord's name, and also English songs, all crowned by your holiness' soul-elevating Kirtans-they make me forget where I am. This is in sharp contrast to several other Ashrams where they prohibit singing or playing on musical instruments, where only dry philosophy is taught. They make one feel a college atmosphere! I am indeed blessed to have visited this Ashram..... What is that light, Swamiji?' That is the office where several Sadhaks are busy working."

It is wonderful.'

'I love synthesis of work, devotion and knowledge- everything should be nicely combined. Some Vedantins, in their ignorance, condemn Kirtan. They class personal gods in the Paroksha category. Direct realisation of the Impersonal Absolute they term Aparoksha. They greatly extol the latter and thoughtlessly condemn the former. Truth is neither Dwaita, nor Advaita. It is beyond both. Greatest Advaitins like Sankaracharya and Madhusudana Saraswati have devoutly sung the glories of the Lord. What a great devotion they had! They had understood

Vedanta in its true perspective. There is no life in either institutions or individuals if the Lord's names are not sung. Even Suka, who always lived in Truth, recited the Lord's name. It is high time the present day Vedantins and sannyasins realise this.'

The above is the gist of a very interesting conversation that took place between Siva and a Deputy Collector and a Headmaster who were both on a visit to the Ashram.

GLORY OF SERVICE

You have only developed a little love for Kirtan. Otherwise, you like to read and meditate only. You cannot enjoy meditation if the impurities in the mind are not completely washed off and your ego subdued. This time it is all right. Next time you come, you must do a lot of work. Then by comparison, you will know the glory of selfless service.' said Siva to a young Kundalini Yoga practitioner who had come to the office to take leave of Siva after a short stay in the Ashram.

PASS THE TESTS

A Sadhu from Rishikesh called on Siva and narrated to him at length a dispute between the Mahant of an Ashram and a rich Bhakta who had also built an Ashram near the former's. The quarrel arose over a piece of land. The attitude of the rich man clearly proved his jealousy at the Sadhu's popularity among the devotees.

'Money, fame and lust are all great tests. A Sannyasin or a householder devotee might imagine himself great and saintly: when these tests come, he will succumb to them like a lamb at the hands of a leopard. Saintliness consists in constant vigilance and jumping over the hurdles of money, fame and lust, when they are set up by Maya. Great South Indian saints were put through strange tests. Maya tried to lead a saint astray: on whatever he set

his foot, it would be turned into a diamond. Apsara girls were sent to attend on him. But the saint was unmoved. Only then could he reach the divine.' Said Siva to us when the Sadhu had gone.

11th JUNE 1948

THE PLACE OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN KIRTAN

They derive a lot of inspiration from the cymbals and tymbals. Especially in public performances, these musical instruments are a great help. Concentration of mind is also induced.' Siva said as people were beginning to collect near the office for the Kirtan by Swami Mukund Hari of Bhatinda.

The type of Kirtan that we do is good for meditative people. Without the harmonium or other musical instruments, go on singing the Kirtan and this induces meditation. Samadhi will easily supervene. There are no distractions.

'One must be trained in both. For personal Sadhana and for select meditation groups, the Kirtan without instruments must be used: and for mass gatherings, the harmonium, etc., will be helpful.

12th JUNE 1948

TO THEE, O SEVAMURTHY!

It is in the memory of many Sadhus living in Rishikesh now that Siva used to walk a few miles from his secluded hut to the Annakshetra for his Bhiksha in the hot midday sun. The Sadhus generally do not have the 'Darshan' of a greater functionary than the cooks in the Kshetras. Even the Manager's clerk is rarely approached by the Sadhus.

By dint of selfless service over a long period, however, Siva's fame had taken wings. His glory is sung everywhere. Siva's humility and easy accessibility have now become proverbial.

To Siva's abode of Bliss wends his way the Secretary of the Kali Kamliwala Kshetra-Sri Rai Bahadur Sridutt Sharmaji. Siva greets him with a hearty laugh and respectful Pranam.

The characteristic hospitality: fruits, milk, etc.

'Swamiji, I have a request to make.'

I am always at your service!'

'Kindly accept the honorary Advisership of the Kshetra. We all of us feel that the Kshetra and the Rishikesh Sadhus generally will all be greatly benefited by your sage advice. You are the only Sannyasin who can advise us.'

Siva sank into silence.

The Rai Bahadur pleaded, insistently.

'Yes, Maharaj, I shall certainly serve you all as an adviser.'

After the Rai Bahadur left, Siva told us: 'At first I did not want to accept the job. But, then I thought, this might be an opportunity offered by the Lord for me to serve the Sadhus. I will not forsake any opportunity of doing service. So, I accepted. He was also greatly pleased.'

14th JUNE 1948

DIVINE LIFE IN PRACTICE

Sri R.R. Tiwari, M.A., L.L.B., of Gwalior, introduced to Siva, his friend, a retired Colonel who had held the post of a Minister of a State: an old man who confronted Siva with the question: How to lead the divine life?'

'Practise meditation. Do Japa. Get up at 4 a.m. All these I have given in my Twenty Instructions.' Siva handed a copy of the leaflet to the Colonel.

'All these I know, Swamiji.'

That is all. The rest lies in practice.'

I have been practising in my own way. But I have not actually experienced the Ananda that is said to flow from such practices.'

You must be regular in your practices. And, go on doing till you reach your goal-even if it takes several births.'

'Ah, that is it! I have not been regular at all, Swamiji. I shall try now.

You must devote your entire time now to Sadhana, as you are retired now.'

Unfortunately, Swamiji, I am still leading the old way of life. I retired on a pension which was my full pay.'

That is extraordinary. It is all due to God's grace. You must do a lot of charity. You must reduce your expenses. So long you have supported a small family. Now you must expand and treat all poor people as members of your family.'

That, too, I have not done so far, because my expenses have remained the same. But in a way, I am doing charity also. I am paying a number of servants.'

No, no: that is not charity. How much money have you given to the lepers on the roadside? Every man is generous to himself. You must lead a life of seclusion and spend at least half your pension, if not the full amount, in charity. Then you will experience the bliss that comes out of Lord's grace.'

15th JUNE, 1948

JIVANMUKTI EXPLAINED

Sri R.R. Tiwari is a Jnana Yogi. He repeats OM and has adopted Nirguna Upasana.

He asked Siva to suggest the royal road to Bliss.

'Control the mind. Eradicate the Vasanas inside. Become a Jivanmukta.'

'Swamiji, please tell me how to eradicate the Vasanas.' 'Meditate constantly on the Satchidananda Atman. Raise the Brahmakara Vritti. Through intense practice, you will be able to go beyond even this. The complete elimination of all mental modifications is the goal according to Patanjali Maharshi also. This is the road to Jivanmukti. By this practice, you will soon attain Manonasa'.

'What will be our condition after Manonasa, Swamiji?'

The whole world is a mere creation of your mind. With Manonasa, this illusion also vanishes. You are able to realise your own Satchidananda Swaroopa. You will become a Jivanmukta if you are established in Brahmic

consciousness.'

'Swamiji, I have a doubt. If the Jivanmukta has had Manonasa, then how does he work in the world?'

'Some Vedantins hold the theory that there are two things- Samadhi Jnani and Vyavahara Jnani. When the Jnani is in Samadhi, he has absolutely no dualistic consciousness. However, when he comes down from this state and undertakes Lokasamgraha, he has Vyavahara Jnana. He is conscious of the unity in diversity.

'Swamiji, if the mind is completely annihilated, how can Vrittis arise in it again?'

'In a Jivanmukta, there is Sarupa Manonasa. The Rajasic and Tamasic elements in it are destroyed. Pure Satva alone exists. This lasts so long as Prarabdha lasts. Prarabdha has its play on his body. Heat and cold, diseases, etc. affect the body. But, as his Antahkarana is devoid of Rajas and Tamas and only pure Satva is left, he is conscious of Atman in this. The Dwandwas do not

affect his inner blissful state. In Videha-mukti, when the body falls as a result of the exhaustion of the Prarabdha, there is Aroopa Manonasa. The Jnani rests for ever in the non-dual state till the body is decomposed. This is the supreme state. Attain this by vigilance and vigorous practice. Jai Ho! Tiwariji!'

THOU, NOT I

Yesterday afternoon, Siva had asked me to write a letter to one Capt. G.S.K. Iyer of Tiruvidamarudur who had just organised a branch of the Divine Life Society. At that time, Siva had told me that this Capt. was Siva's school-mate. He told us several reminiscences, too. What a loving memory of old companions!

This evening, I was typing that letter. Siva was talking to several visitors. While I was yet halfway through the letter, he suddenly turned to me and said: This G.S.K. Iyer was previously in Banaras.'

I was literally taken aback. What a coincidence! Dumb-founded, I listened.

'He was a very pushing man. He has had a very eventful life and has acquired many titles and much fame-naturally, a lot of money, too. Write a nice letter to him.'

I shyly admitted to Siva that I was just typing the letter.

A mere 'hum' and a mischievous smile which said, so to say: 'see, how I knew what you are doing.' or 'do not let your head reel in pride. It is I who am working through it. I know just exactly what you are doing and when! Beware!' Oh Siva, may thy lotus feet crown my head!

7th JULY, 1948

YOU HAVE ATTRACTED THE ENTIRE WORLD

The most friendly and cordial greetings extended by Siva to an old colleague, Swami Abhayananda, was a touching scene when Siva and some of the important disciples had just finished a meeting of the Ashramites and the local public on the subject of the amendment of the Hindu Code.

Siva (touching the feet of the newcomer) 'OM Namo Narayanaya! Aaiye, Maharaj.' Siva made the new Swami sit by his side and commenced a pleasant conversation.

Swami A: 'Swamiji, I admire the work you have done. Everywhere, people are singing your glory.'

It is all the grace of saints like you that has enabled me to do a little service.'

'No, no. Maharaj! This is all the fruit of your intense Tapas and devotion to the Lord.'

'I think we are meeting after about 15 years."

'Yes, you are right. Swamiji, I can never forget your inspiring song Agad Bhum. You have created a big institution around you and attracted the whole world. You are the same easily accessible humble Swamiji of 111 Kutir of Swarga Ashram. Though many things have developed around you, I see you are the same loving Prema-murthy."

Siva (turning to a disciple) 'Bring some fruits. Maharaj, have this little offering. Please be gracious to honour the Ashram's Annakshetra today.'

'As you command me.'

Siva: 'Swamiji, do you remember our trip to Paraso hills (Parasara hills) where we had good Kirtan?'

Yes, I well remember P.T. Krishna Chandra Sharma, Advocate, taking us to Gudgawa near Delhi and thence to Paraso hills. We

had just attended the annual function of the Nawal Kishore Prem Sabha.'

'Yes, we had whole night Kirtan there.'

Your publicity work is really marvellous. In all important journals, be it health, political, religious-your article is there.'

'Yes, My Magazine of India is publishing my articles for a very long time. Since 1929, for nearly twenty years.'

'What! Twenty years? No author has written for so long a time and no publisher has been patient enough to publish the articles of any one individual contributor for so long. That clearly shows that you have got a very tight grip over the reading public and you have simply captured their hearts. Spiritual Lessons in the 'My Magazine' is like nectar drops.'

4th AUGUST, 1948

THE REFUGE OF ALL

An aspirant has come from Orissa. He has received ochre-robes from a Sannyasi of his place, who, however, did not accept him as his initiated disciple-it was his policy not to initiate anyone into Sannyasa and make him his disciple.

Yesterday, he came and requested that he should be initiated into Sannyasa. I said: No. Yet, he has the perseverance to come again today and request again. I had a heart-to-heart talk with him. Now, I have decided to give him Sannyasa.

There should be some like him. I should have a heart-to-heart talk: if my heart permits me, I will give them Sannyasa. God will take care of them.'

Turning to the new arrival, Siva said: 'Yes, I will give you Sanyasa on Vijaya Dasami day.'

Mystic or plain language?

25th AUGUST, 1948

WHAT IS REST?

Sri A... is enjoying a furlough. He caught Siva's eye.

You are on leave? Yes: you should have some rest! You are heavily overworked!'

And then added with a mischievous smile: 'Na Gurur Na Sishyah! What is there in service? Silent meditation in seclusion is the only way to Moksha!'

Siva does not believe in holidaying. Change of work is rest for him. Nishkamya Seva with Narayana Bhava is itself the highest form of meditation, which compels perennial adherence.

SEPTEMBER, 1948

2nd SEPTEMBER, 1948

COBRAS WITHIN

Siva was returning from the temple. As he was passing near the Yajnashala, Sivadayalji saluted him. Siva in his characteristic way asked: 'Everything all right?'

Sivadayalji replied: 'Yes, Swamiji. But there was a serpent in the room. So, everything was upset last night.'

You are afraid of this small creature! Look within. Introspect. There are countless cobras-Kama, Krodha, Lobha, etc.-within you. They are biting you every day. Still you take pleasure in feeding them! Mind is the biggest and most venomous cobra. Vrittis are its hoods. Eradicate them."

3rd SEPTEMBER, 1948

THAT WHICH IS THERE IS HERE

A few Madrasi disciples of Siva and myself had just returned from Badrikashram and Kedarnath. Like a fond mother, Siva enquired about our welfare, the comforts and discomforts on the way, etc. The affectionate pair of eyes noticed that some of us had been thinned out.

You are much reduced. It will perhaps take a month to pick up your health again.' After thus comforting us, he asked: 'Now, where is the next trip to? To Tirupathi?. .Ohji, do not run about here and there. Tirupathi is here only."

Yes: and I could not help thinking: Himalayan regions are worth seeing-the places, where great Rishis did Tapas. Further, the walking exercise, inhaling the pure Himalayan air laden with the healing power of innumerable herbs bestows good health on the pilgrims: but some people develop this into a craze for wandering. All their life is spent in wandering. Then they begin to extol certain places and criticise others. You have now visited one or two important places; other places are also like this only. Now you should stick to this place-there is a lot of work to do!

A TWO-FOLD LOSS

'OM Namo Narayanaya! Swamiji!' Siva greeted a new arrival. But this new Swamiji will not speak!

'Achcha! You are a Mowni Baba? Dear Swamiji, give up this sort of meaningless Mowna-Sadhana. Mita-Bhashan is Mowna. You should talk a little and talk sweetly. You are not making proper use of a good faculty and thus losing the opportunity of discussing spiritual subjects with others, and thus learning. You have also lost many opportunities of rendering service to His children. A comforting word to some, a consoling message, a good word of greeting-how much joy you can infuse into others! This is a great loss. Give up this Mowna now itself."

Then turning to us, Siva said: 'Some of these people do not know why they are observing Mowna. Somebody observed Mowna: and, they also started imitating. They will not talk: but they will waste hours trying to make others understand what they could have conveyed in a couple of minutes. They will not talk with their mouth, but their mind is always talking fruitlessly. Control of speech is Mowna. Mita-Bhashan is Mowna. But this Mowna is merely a whim!' said Siva with a meaningful smile.

4th SEPTEMBER, 1948

NEELAKANTHA DIXIT'S AVATAR

Swami Satchidanandaji presented to the Ashram library a copy of 'Ananda Sagara Sthava' of Sri Neelakantha Dikshitar, an illustrious savant of the Appayya Dikshitar's family, and an author of many famous works in Sanskrit.

'Swamiji,' said Satchidanandaji, In this work, Sri Neelakantha Dikshitar has often prayed with a melting heart full of devotion and yearning, that he should live in seclusion on the banks of the Ganges. Providence, however, decreed that he should pass away without fulfilling this desire. And, Neelakantha Dikshitar was also very fond of dealing with Siva Lilas. In this regard, I was wonder-struck to find that what he has done in Sanskrit, you have done in English, the modern language. Swamiji, I am perfectly certain that Neelakantha has re-incarnated as Sivananda, to fulfill his great desire.

Sri Lakshminarayana Sastrigal, a descendant of Appayya Dikshitar, is also of the same opinion. 'Swamiji, many people in Pattamadai and Kodahanallur also think that you are Neelakantha's Avatar."

Siva's only reply was a Vedantic smile and he went on with his work. He knows how many souls' yearnings have found their fulfillment in him.

FOOD SADHANA

The Hanuman Prasad distributor at the conclusion of the evening Satsang provided the occasion: Siva first remarked that it had been nicely prepared and exhorted someone in the Satsang to take a second helping, too. Sivanarayanji was taking some Prasad for some Ashramite who could not attend the Satsang.

'For whom? For Sridhara Swamiji?' Siva asked. And, this led him to a nice discourse.

'You will be wonderstruck,' he remarked, turning to a visitor. 'Sridhara Swamiji has developed a baby-stomach. He takes very little food. He cannot digest more. In his case, it is due to ill-health. But, there are some who concentrate all their mind on food-Sadhana. All their life they will be thinking of which food is Sattvic, which food Rajasic and so on. Some abhor chillies. They cannot take even mildly pungent things. Their health will be upset. They become faddists. They make their system very sensitive. Even a slight deviation from the routine spoils their health. One should not be like that. I think it is necessary that a Sanyasin should have an Asuric stomach. He should be able to eat whatever he gets without insisting on this or that kind of food. Sometimes the Bhiksha will consist only of sweets: sometimes roti and dhal: sometimes rice and sambhar full of chillies.

Too much of food-Sadhana creates egoism also. I have given up sugar: I have given up salt; I eat only neem leaves; I eat only raw vegetables.' This way he is filled with ideas of what he has left and what he is eating. Food is after all a necessary evil. The main thing is God-realisation. They forget that.

There are many such whims among Sadhakas. Some will wear only a kowpeen. Swami Pranavanandaji will go about naked through villages. The Avadhoota state is difficult to attain. It is not external nakedness that is needed but mental nakedness.

There was an Avadhuta Swami K... He used to stand in the Ganges in winter and in the hot sands in summer. He would sleep only on grass. Once Pundit Malaviyaji took him to Mussoorie. There the Swami began to demand his grass bed. And, it had to be got after much difficulty.

These Sadhanas have no real value. No doubt, such restrictions are necessary for some time. But extremes are always to be avoided. The goal should not be lost sight of.'

8th SEPTEMBER, 1948

VEDANTA KESARI

No one expected: and no one noticed.

The Bhajan Hall was packed with Sadhakas and visitors: the morning Sadhana class was in progress-silent Japa and meditation had been done, Krishnanandaji had led the audience in reciting Santi Patha and Guru Stotras, and Sridharji (Sridhar was swami Chidananda's pre-Sannyasa name) was talking on Sadhana. Visibility outside was yet too poor for persons moving about a little away from you to be recognised.

Quietly, Siva slipped in through a side-door! And,-I cannot express in words what my own feelings were when I accidentally happened to see this wonder of wonders-he had taken a 'back-bench' seat-as one of the members of the audience intently listening to Sridharji's lecture!

The entire gathering literally sat up and rubbed their eyes when this magnificent personality stood up and roared OM at the conclusion of Sridharji's talk. There was pin-drop silence. Siva

did Kirtan, which gradually turned into a lecture-Kirtan on the lines of 'God is Truth-Govinda'. Then.... better hearken to Siva himself.

The Srutis declare 'Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma, Neha Nanasti Kinchana-All indeed is Brahman: there is no such thing as diversity. This is your essential nature. In truth, you are Akhanda Paripoorna Satchidananda. It is described as Amala, Vimala, Achala, Santam, Sivam, Advaitam. Due to Avidya, you do not know your essential nature. When Avidya is removed, you shine as the Akhanda Paripoorna Satchidananda. In reality you are Aparichchinna, undivided, One, the Essence. You falsely imagine that you have hands, feet, eyes, mouth. Remember this: Thou Art That' (Tat Twam Asi). Tat Twam Asi-the Self is identical with Brahman. You are one with the Supreme Truth. When you are suffering from any disease, remember you are the Akhanda Paripoorna Satchidananda. Assert I am not the body, I am not the mind. How powerful is this medicine-Sivoham, Satchidananda Swaroopoham. Do not run to doctors. Do not take injections. This is the most potent injection-Satchidananda Swarupoham!

Through ignorance you identify yourself with the body. Remove ignorance through constant practice, renunciation, through this powerful assertion. In whatever condition you may be; you may have no bread to eat-even if you have no clothes to wear-assert Sivoham, Satchidananda Swarupoham and constantly dwell on your identity with Brahman.

Thou art That. This is the gist of Vedanta: this is the most powerful remedy for all ills. This is what the sages have taught in the Upanishads.'

'May the blessings of Sankaracharya, Lord Dattatreya and the Brahma Kumaras be upon you all! May you all shine as Jivanmuktas in this very birth!'

Blessed indeed are those who listened to these words of wisdom fall from the lips of Siva-the Vedanta Kesari. Thrice blessed are those who have inscribed his words on the tablet of their heart.

JUST PLAIN SPEAKING

'Ohji, just a minute'.-Siva stayed the formal opening of the Silver Jubilee Kutirs this morning. Then, facing the gathering:

These Kutirs have already been opened three months ago. Sadhakas were coming in large numbers. We were in need of rooms. So, we opened these Kutirs with Kirtan. This is only the formal opening ceremony.

You see a silk cloth there. It merely covers a slab on which is written that these are Silver Jubilee Kutirs constructed out of the donation given by Mrs. Liliane Shamash etc. There is nothing but that. The world is just a veil like this. Brahman is covered over by colourful Maya. When the veil is removed, you see the Reality. Therefore, remove the veil of Maya through Viveka and Vichara.

The world is a mere play of colours. Do not be deceived. It is all like the play of children. You simply close your fist-the child is curious to know what is within. Then you open out the fist-there is nothing inside. You have a hearty laugh. Similar is the case with the world.

These Kutirs are opened a second time today. There is nothing but repetition in the universe. There have been many Vyasas, many Naradas. Even now people do not know which Vasishta expounded the Vasishta Ramayana. It is all a cycle of births and deaths. It is all the play of Dwandwas. Rise above this play of Dwandwas. Tear the veil. Negate the false colours. Perceive the Reality. In Reality, you are all the same Atman. Just a paint, a touch of powder, lip-stick, dupes you. Wake up and realise your essential nature which is Satchidananda.'

Siva then formally declared the Kutirs open.

IN RETROSPECT

Sadhu Murugadasji has arrived.

Siva recognised him at once. Murugadasji had previously come to the Ashram long ago with a plain dhoti on, without any money. Murugadasji went to Badrinath. On his return, Siva was enamoured of his sweet Kirtans-Siva's life-breath-and requested him to stay on for some time. Now, Murugadasji had acquired great renown as an inspiring Kirtanist, and was moving about in 'planes.

Hearing this, Siva humorously remarked: 'We, too, did not have one anna worth of potato when we came here. Now look at the Ashram!'

Such is the glory of Nivritti Marga and devotion to the lotus feet of the Lord.

THE LADDU THAT GIVES IMMORTALITY

Murugadasji sang a song. It was sweet. As it was in Tamil, Siva started explaining it in English. And, how? in the form of sweet music.

'Murugadasji sang a sweet song. It was like sweet Laddu, Jalebi, Rasagulla. What did he say? He wanted you to eat the sweetest Laddu-that sweet Laddu is the name of your Indweller. The two-lettered name of RAMA is the sweetest Laddu. Muruga, Radheshyam-all the names of God are sweet Laddus. OM is the sweetest Laddu. It is the most ancient Laddu which the sages like Yagnavalkya, Shams Tabriez and others ate. It is this Laddu alone that will make you immortal. Eat this Laddu and you will have no more births and deaths. Who will not eat this sweetest Laddu?'

To Siva, all sweetness, all goodness and all auspiciousness are only in God. Worldly objects have no place in his domain.

SIVA'S CREED

The unopened book in Sridharji's hand attracted Siva's attention, as we were all coming out of the Silver Jubilee Kutirs after the opening ceremony.

You wanted to read something?'

Yes, Swamiji, I wanted to read a couple of chapters from this, on Siva's Creed and Siva's Philosophy.'

'Siva's Creed? What is Siva's Creed? It is all Mithya, delusion, a play of sounds-mere words!' Siva gave a hearty laugh and walked away, leaving the gathering to understand this-Siva's Creed-to the best of their understanding!

ONLY DIFFERENCE IN OUTLOOK

An admirer of Arya Samaj has come; he expresses his dislike for Karma Kanda.

'Yes: there in the cities-you have one type of Karma. Here you have another type. It is binding there. Here is Nishkamya, free-a type of Karma which liberates you from the thraldom of Maya. This is the Sannyasi-Karma Kanda'. The difference is one of outlook-but that is, in fact, an ocean of difference!'

TRUE IMPORT OF DAYANANDA'S TEACHINGS

'Swamiji, I want some instructions on concentration.'

You also do not believe in names and forms? But, that is not easily possible for all. The mind wants something to hang on. In the initial stages, it cannot hang on nothing or an idea. At least you should have the form of OM.

This antagonism to names and forms is the creation of not correctly understood some people who have Dayanandaji's teachings. Dayanandaji himself did not condemn Kirtan of God's name. He was in a high stage of evolution, and he concerned himself only with the fundamentals of Vedic truths. He did not categorically condemn Nama-Rupa. He only omitted any mention of them. People should take him in the proper light instead of reading their own views into his sublime teachings.

'You read my book: Concentration and Meditation'. It will clear all your doubts. It contains a solution to every problem that can possibly confront an aspirant in his practice of concentration and meditation. When you have finished reading it, you will find that you have no more doubts. If you still have any, then come to me. I will explain the subject to you.'

A SURPRISE REJOINDER

A visitor was greatly eulogising Siva's organisation at the Headquarters of the Divine Life Society.

'But, Swamiji, there should be more Kutirs and rooms for visitors.'

Yes: I, too, would like to construct many more rooms," came Siva's ready rejoinder, 'but, the money is in your pocket.'

THE SUPREME SAVIOUR

Sri Thakur Prasad Singhji has arrived-to attend the Sannyasa Silver Jubilee Celebrations. He says: 'No one else has done so much as Swamiji to awaken humanity to the purpose of life. I would say, after Sankaracharya no one else has done so much to uphold Hindu Sanatana Dharma.

Swamiji's message has spread throughout the world illuminating countless hearts, and turning the deluded souls straying in various directions, to the right path."

PROMISE MUST BE FULFILLED

Sri Thakur Prasad and his family belong to the orthodox type. The entire family insists on having Siva's Darshan before they take their food. He made this request to Siva. Siva was busily engaged the whole morning: and had gone to his Kutir. At once he remembered of his promise. He should not keep quiet one more minute: nor could he ignore the promise. He at once went out to Sri Thakur Prasadji's Kutir.

THE MASTER WAITS

There he found that Thakur Prasadji had gone out. Wonder of wonders the Master waits there till the disciple comes back. He does not consider that a waste of his time nor that it is beneath his dignity to wait. He utilises this period also very usefully. Siva makes the children in the house sing the Lord's name and teaches them some Kirtan Dhwanis. Then, a sweet discourse to these little devotees.'

THE PEACE MAKER

Swami A....comes there and salutes Siva. Swami A. has had a bit of a quarrel with someone else. Siva found that the best opportunity to patch up the quarrel, and to advise both the parties to be peaceful.

Then Thakur Prasadji and his family had Siva's Darshan and Siva returned to his Kutir.

SIVA'S LOVE CONQUERS

Last evening, the Satsang programme was extended as it was raining and the Ganga Arati was postponed. So, Siva called upon the daughters of Srimathi Liliane to deliver short lectures.

A local resident got a bit offended that his children were not given an opportunity to speak also. He was fond of criticising the

Ashram activities, too. But Siva's patience and love know no limits. He does not even adopt an attitude of indifference towards those who carp and cavil at him or the institution. He extends to them, too, his love!

Next day (today) one of the first items in the programme was lectures by those children. And, Siva presented Rs. 10 to the children as a token of his love.

SIVA-KRISHNA IDENTITY

The procession with the palanquin in which had been placed the pictures of Lord Krishna and Swamiji was in progress. Half the way, Krishna's picture was in front and the party sang the Maha Mantra.

When the time to turn back arrived, we, who were carrying the palanquin just turned the other way ourselves, instead of turning the palanquin round. Automatically, Swamiji's picture occupied the front. The Kirtan Dhwani was changed to

Guru Maharaj Guru Jai Jai

Sivananda Sat Guru Jai Jai

Siva would not allow this.

We managed to keep Siva's picture in front: but then Siva insisted that we continued the Maha Mantra.

We were all happy: for, Siva is indeed Lord Sri Krishna.

9th SEPTEMBER, 1948

OF COURSE, I KNOW YOU

'What is your name?' asked Siva, scanning a lady devotee sitting in front of him: she had arrived this afternoon with her husband and children.

'Sarala Devi.'

The left eye closed with one hand, Siva reflected for a moment. 'Oh, yes. I remember. You have come here previously. I think your mother also came with you.'

'Yes, Swamiji, we had your Darshan in the room below.'

That is right. That was the old S. P. L. Office. Where do you come from now, from Ambala?'

'No, Swamiji, we have been transferred to Rohtak now.'"

Pointing to the gentleman by her side, 'He is your husband? You previously said your husband was an Excise Inspector or something."

'Yes, Swamiji, you are right. I am an Excise Inspector in Rohtak,' replied Sri C.L. Nangiah.

To Mrs. Sarala Nangiah again: 'You were a small girl then: now you have grown into a big lady!' They had all a hearty laugh. Yet, Siva is able to recognise them!

IMPORTANCE OF DIARY

Sarala Deviji is a very earnest Sadhaka: and a pure-hearted Bhakta.

'Swamiji, kindly tell me some method to control this mind. It seems we will never be able to control it.' The husband just looks on.

'Do Japa. Be regular in your Sadhana. Do Kirtan also. Through practice alone will you be able to control the mind. You should maintain the diary. Now you are not doing this.'

I do maintain the diary, Swamiji.' Siva's face brightens. 'But, I am ashamed of sending it to you as my Sadhana is very irregular.'

'Whatever little you do, however irregularly, you should send me the diary. Then only there will be the inducement to be regular in Sadhana and to evolve quickly.'

THE GLORY OF NAME

Why, the sky has miraculously cleared!' was the expression on everyone's lips. 'Ring the bell,' said Siva.

Sridhara Swamiji came with a towel on his head-it was still slightly drizzling-after a heavy downpour of rain! 'It might begin to rain again!' thought a few.

The party left Ananda Kutir with Maha Mantra Kirtan. Swarg Ashram-the destination-was hung over with heavy clouds. When the bridge was crossed, sky cleared on the Swarg Ashram side and the clouds moved to Ananda Kutir side!

From the opposite bank, Siva sent out an OM roar, as a wireless message to Gauri Prasadji.

Many Sadhus had assembled in Judge Gauri Prasadji's house. With Maha Mantra Kirtan, Sive's party walked into his house.

Murugadasji sang. Then Siva got up. The sky was rent with the name of the Lord. Yet, Siva was not satisfied. His keen eyes searched out the 'silent pockets'-and quickly he pointed his finger in that direction. Then OM chanting- louder still louder-till Siva was satisfied.

'Jis Hal me Jis Desh me Jis Vesh me Raho Radha Raman Radha Raman Radha Raman Kaho!'

The response was not up to Siva's mark. Siva burst forth:

'Lord Jesus says that man cannot live by bread alone. But man can live eternally on the Divine Name of the Lord alone. The name is the source of all strength and power, all joy. Tukaram, Kabir, Tulasidasji, Mira, Gauranga-all of them lived on Name alone.

When you are hungry, you take food: but after some time, again you feel hungry. Permanent satisfaction cannot come out of food.

The name of the Lord is a divine healer, too. Man is deceived by a false notion that his diseases are cured by the doctor's injections. I have got a divine Prem injection which cures all diseases, and infuses new energy in you. That is the Gopikawallabh-injection.

(Siva actually administered the injection-Siva uttered at the top of his voice 'Gopikawallabh': the audience responded 'Radheshyam'.) The doctors only inject some liquid, a little water. This is the divine injection which will cure you of the disease of birth and death.

You do not need any great intellectual power, you need not be a millionaire; you need not perform severe austerities. But, you should have faith the heart. Do not bring your intellect here. Do not argue. Intellect is a finite instrument and cannot take you far. Reason can take you to the threshold. The heart alone can give you that transcendental experience.'

'Like Mira, you can dance, too."

So saying, Siva danced! This was again followed by Om and Ram chanting. Then loud Japa of RAM.

If the external thoughts are more numerous, and the mind wanders more, repeat RAM faster.'

With a prayer for Vishwa Kalyan, Siva terminated the function.

On our way back, Siva and party went to the Tika Rani's Siva temple. The Maharani was eager to see Siva who at once paid her a visit.

As the party was returning to Ananda Kutir, the moon shone in all her splendour amidst a sprinkling of white clouds which added to the grandeur of the blue sky. The murmuring Ganges reflecting

the silvery rays of the moon was a fitting background music to the Kirtan Dhwanis that arose from Siva's Party.

10th SEPTEMBER, 1948

FORGOTTEN SO SOON?

I entered the office and prostrated to Siva in the morning. Siva at once recognised me as one who had missed the previous night's Divya Nama Kirtan.

'Divya Nama Kirtan has been held several times: but last night's Kirtan excelled all others. Murugadasji, Sivaramakrishnier, Venkateshwara Iyer and many other experts participated. It was most wonderful.

'Even if you felt tired, or even if you were out of sorts, Divya Nama Kirtan would have made you all right. It is the most powerful tonic. And, I had just said so-in my Swarg Ashram talk.'

Shame-facedly I sought Siva's feet with my eyes.

ETERNAL STUDENT

I am always a student. Some people think: It is the same Divya Nama Kirtan, I have already seen it a number of times. I never feel so. I attend every function and carefully listen to all lectures. What wonderful points Sridharji brings forth! I am all attention to these. I then introspect and find out the subtle defects inside. I am eternally a student and Sadhaka. Some people take Bala Mantra, attain some Mantra Siddhi and then go to sleep. They do not think of the innumerable defects that still lurk inside. That is the most essential thing.'

VEDANTIC COOLNESS

Siva should be watched only during the busy days at Ananda Kutir. The din and bustle of intense and multifarious activity-as is witnessed during the birthday celebrations-is enough to disturb

the mental equilibrium of anyone. Duties are sometimes neglected, details ignored, workers get tired out, it is then that Siva's Vedantic coolness comes into full play and his powers of Ashtavadhan find a proper occasion to manifest themselves.

The organiser in Siva wishes to keep the neighbouring institutions friendly: Siva asks someone to take a plateful of fruits, money and flowers to Darshan Mahavidyalaya as an offering of love.

Sweets are distributed to the local people, too.

I was a bit surprised when Vishnudevji walked into the office early in the morning with a covered plate in hand and said: 'Swamiji has asked that this should be kept ready on his table. Murugadasji is leaving today and these fruits and cloth are for him.' The preparations had started yesterday itself. When Siva casually asked Murugadasji if he wore only Khadi, one could hardly guess what was up Siva's sleeve. Siva wanted to present Murugadasji cloth to his own liking.

SYNTHETIC PRESENT

Murugadasji comes into the office to take leave of Siva. He gets a 'synthetic blessing' from the Prophet of the Yoga of Synthesis. Siva's own silent blessing for Murugadasji's soul: some books for his "head": and some for his "heart": fruits and cloth for his body: and money for whatever need he may have on his way back to Madras.

Murugadasji is now very well off: yet, Siva's love cannot be repressed.

Another visitor who intends to leave today is talking to Siva, having his doubts cleared. Sivaramakrishnier is waiting for an interview. In the meantime, Radha is waiting with a message from her father. Piles of letters on his table-visitors and Sadhus all round-all waiting for Siva's attention. Anyone might get irritated

or run away to seclusion, considering all this waste of time and energy. One by one, the Master attends to the Lord's devotees, his own masters.

What a great faith do these people have! Sivaramakrishnier says: Even amidst the most trying circumstances, my wife and I remain absolutely calm. For, we know Swamiji's protecting hands are ever around us and we feel that Swamiji is God and that everything happens according to his will.'

Sivaramakrishnier needs some legal advice. He represents his difficulties to Siva who at once introduces him to Sastriji. This is one of the unique traits in Siva. He does not hesitate to introduce the devotees to one another to the advantage of all concerned. He introduces a European Sadhaka to one of the advanced Yogic students of Europe: this pen-friendship is a great service.

A recent incident comes to mind. A leprosy patient came from Chingleput. He had been refused admission in the Government hospital. Someone sent him to Siva. From here, Siva sent him to Chingleput with a letter of introduction to Dr. Mangalam, asking her to help the patient, if necessary, by sending him with a special note to the Hospital. Selfless service has found in Siva its very soul.

FOOD SADHAKAS

Here is Raman Nambiar who has been living on nuts, fruits, and milk, for a considerable time now. This came to the notice of Siva.

'Sadhana is grossly misunderstood. What the Lord meant by Sattvic food is that man should not take too much of chillies, too much of salt, etc. Chillies are good appetising agents. Salt is necessary for health. A little of chillies and salt are essential. Control consists only in not catering to the vagaries of the palate.

The practice of control methods should not weaken the system or make it sensitive.

Venkataramier of Namakkal told me once that he had given up salt, chillies and tamarind, for some time: his system had become so very sensitive that even a little of these in food would upset him. Such people then have to live their whole life on such restricted diet. Venkataramier had to resume normal diet with much difficulty.

There was another good soul in Swarg Ashram-Sri P.V. Acharyaji. He was a B.A., L.L.B. He was a good Bhakta and a very good Sadhaka. He used to measure his food in a balance. So much atta is necessary for so many breads: so many ounces of dhal etc. He was very fond of this sort of Sattvic food. But he thought that sweets fell into this category: and he consumed a lot of sweets. In course of time, this produced diabetes in him. Then he came to me and said he was at last disillusioned. Then he began to take normal diet.

GANDHIJI AND C.R.

'Sastriji once said that even Gandhiji admitted that his dietetic regulations were the price he had to pay for his health. If people accustom themselves to taking goat's milk once, they will have to carry a goat with them wherever they go. But, C. Rajagopalachariar is of my type: he would take any kind of food, but moderately. That should be the attitude of everyone.

You should observe these regulations once in a way. Once in fifteen days, observe a complete fast. Give up salt on Sundays. Live on milk and fruits alone for some days. Train yourself like that.

In Ayodhya, some people live on chillies alone. That is going to the other extreme. The wise plan is to observe moderation in everything."

At this time, someone offered some guava fruits to Siva. And, Siva offered one to Raman Nambiar.

'What are the properties of this fruit Swamiji?'

'Don't ask me all that: eat it.'

He not only ate the guava fruit without further argument, but started eating a little bread, etc.

THINK TWICE

'Swamiji, I want your blessings. I am thinking of leaving for Banaras today,' said Sri Ramachandra lyer who had a slight misunderstanding with some other workers in the Ashram and had decided to leave.

'Beloved Ram! Sit down. Do not jump to conclusions. Think twice before you act. Now, tell me for what purpose have you come here?'

I came here to do Sadhana and to realise God, Swamiji.'

'Do you know what is Sadhana?'

'I have read in your own books, Swamiji; that Sadhana is self-control, Japa, Kirtan, Service.'

'Have you thought over the matter for a moment-is this action of yours in leaving this Ashram and going to Banaras in consonance with your own resolve to do Sadhana and realise God?'

No reply.

'Sadhana is, as you have rightly said, self-control. Self-control means maintaining mental equilibrium under all circumstances. A

little word from someone greatly upsets you. You are not able to bear a harsh word!'

'But, Swamiji, such things disturb my peace of my mind. I wish to have peace.'

'You will get that peace in Banaras only? If you do not get peace of mind here, you will not get it anywhere else. Peace is within yourself. Think again: stay here for, say, another three days more. Then come to me and say if you still feel like going to Banaras.'

Silence.

'Can you visualise what you will feel three days later? Beloved Ramachandraji, the whole thing will appear as a dream. You will realise that the offensive words are mere vibrations in the air. Now, you are excited. This excitement blinds your vision. You are not able to reason, to discriminate properly. When your mind is cooled down, you will realise your mistake.'

Again silence. Ramachandra Iyer is immersed in deep thought.

'Where else will you get such a spiritual atmosphere? There is the temple: you can attend the Puja morning and evening and get hot, hot Khitchadie Prasad also. There is the Bhajan Hall where you can do Akhanda Kirtan for a few hours daily. Even if you sit for a few minutes in the Bhajan Hall, you will be elevated. Ganges bath, good food, tea, milk and fruits-Oh, it is a blessing to live here. When you go out and suffer, you will realise the difficulties of Samsara.

'My dear Ramji, so many people are daily writing to me: I cannot live here anymore, I want to join your Ashram after resigning my job! God Himself is looking after us. The entire place is filled with the peace-vibrations of sages and saints of yore: therefore, we are ever contented and peaceful. This is the best place for

Sadhana. Why do you think of running here and there? Ohji, give up this idea.'

Ramachandra Iyer prostrates to Siva. He has decided to stay: he is completely transformed now.

NO MOHA FOR ANYONE

Not a few hours had elapsed before another 'case' came up to Siva.

Swami X., an old disciple of Siva, who had taken Sannyasa from Siva years ago, and who has his own circle of followers, etc., got a little irritated over a trivial incident: and thought of going back. He came to take leave of Siva.

'Om Namo Narayanaya, Swamiji Maharaj, I want to return today,' he said and briefly explained what had happened.

'But, what do these little boys know? You are an old Sannyasi. You are a pillar of the Society. The Mission needs veteran Sadhus like you. Now, I have got all young boys: there must be some like you, aged Mahatmas. Only if you stay here will the institution be respectable.' and so on-Siva argued with him for a little while.... 'Achchaji, if you feel like it, you can go.' and then forgot all about it.

Siva tries his best to persuade everyone to stick to the path and to serve the divine life mission: but Siva has no particular attachment to anyone even if he is the most important worker.

HELIX HEDEIRA

'Ohji, third reminder-what about your resolves form?"

'Swamiji, I will fill it in just now and give it to you before I leave.' Immediately, this visitor left Siva's presence-he could not stand Siva's gaze for an instant longer-and, retired into a nearby room for filling in the resolves form.

Siva said: This is what the postal authorities used to do. The first reminder was called Helix. The persons to whom it is addressed may sometimes sleep over it also. But, when he receives the Hedeira reminder, he will not take his lunch, too. He will run about here and there, get the reply and send it at once. This was my Hedeira reminder to this man. I told him on the 8th night that he should fill in the resolves form. I reminded him yesterday morning. And, this morning's is the Hedeira reminder. He cannot rest quiet now till he fills in the resolves form.

The visitor re-entered with the resolves form, duly filled in.

'Nangiahji, it is now your turn: Vishnuji, give him two resolves forms. One for yourself and one for your Sahadharmini. Just take a few mild resolves: I will do two Malas of Japa daily, I will give up eating pedas once a fortnight. You have also learnt Asanas: also Ram, Ram!'

Are these vows, Swamiji?'

They are not vows: but if you have Sraddha (faith) you can convert them into vows. They are only resolves. Always keep them in your mind and try to stick to them. Pray to God: He will give you strength to stick to them and to progress further.'"

They both gave him their resolves forms. Smilingly, Siva received them and said: This is my JABARDASTHI YOGA.'

INITIATION INTO DIVINE LIFE

R. L., the admirer of Arya Samaj, has decided to follow Siva. During the conversation, Siva elicited from him information about his habits and mode of life. The case needs thorough overhauling: but Siva's handling of it is full of tender love.

Try, by gradual practice, to get up at 4 a.m. Then wash your face. Sit for Japa. Sit erect for some time. Otherwise, if you feel it difficult you can lean against the wall. Repeat OM Namo

Bhagavate Vasudevaya. Meditate on the picture of Lord Krishna-at the same time, associate the Mantra with ideas of Purity, Perfection, Wisdom, Infinity, etc. Repeat the Mantra a little aloud if your mind wanders. You can sing the Mantra also. (Siva actually sang the Mantra). You can write this Mantra neatly in a notebook. This is Likhita Japa, a powerful Sadhana for developing concentration.

'Observe Mowna for some time during the day. Go to bed early enough to enable you to get up at 4 a.m. Do not take heavy food at night.'

'Swamiji, I take tea late in the evening: and my night meal also late.'

That is it-the food habits need a thorough overhauling. Take your noon meal at about 11 a.m. Give up the late evening tea and finish your evening meal before 7 p.m. Also try to keep it as light as you can. That will give you sound sleep also.

Maintain the spiritual diary and send me a copy every month. What little Sadhana you are able to do, record it there. Also, write to me about your experiences and difficulties. I will answer them, and will also review your diary.'

Siva then asked Vishnudevji to get a. copy of 'Sangeeta Bhagavata' and 'Sadhana': he, then, handed them to Sri R.L.

This pamphlet 'Sadhana' contains sufficient material for you to start with. You see the sample 'Daily Routine' there. Kindly frame your daily routine on this model. Once you are successful in changing the old habits, you will cultivate a taste for Sadhana, and progress will be rapid. With the progress in Nama-Japa, God's Grace will also descend on you and help you onwards.

The book 'Sangeeta Bhagavata' contains the essence of the 11th Skandha of Bhagavata. You can sing it nicely. (Siva sang a few

lines.) It contains priceless instructions on Vairagya, Japa, Dhyana, Renunciation, etc. Kindly keep this for your daily Swadhyaya. Besides, you can get from Gita Press, Gorakhpur, some good edition of the Gita with Hindi translation and go through that also every day.'

Sri R.L. saluted Siva and started to go: Siva blessed him with folded palms!

'God's blessings are always with you. Jai ho!'

11th SEPTEMBER, 1948

SECULAR DUTIES, TOO

Sri P.K. Subramaniam wants to give up his studies and join the Ashram.

'Swamiji, of late I am not able to read class books, for I feel, immediately I take up my class books that they are not worth studying since they do not contain the element that would satisfy my hungering soul.'

'Beloved child! It is too early for you to renounce the world. Besides, you have got your parents. You should serve them nicely. Earn your livelihood by honest means. Work hard. At the same time, adopt the Nimitta Bhava:

work as an instrument in His hands. Cultivate this. Carry on your studies also. No doubt, knowledge of this phenomenal world would not confer Moksha on you. Yet, it has got its own uses. Nothing is bad in itself; it is the use to which a particular branch of knowledge is put that matters.

Try to carry on your personal Sadhana also side by side. Practise my Twenty Instructions to the best of your ability. Maintain the spiritual diary and send me a copy every month. I will guide you.

Always keep the goal in view. When the time comes, God Himself will facilitate your renunciation. OM Namo Narayanaya.'

When the young man had left the place after prostrating with tearful eyes to Siva, Siva added:

'So many young men are eager to renounce the world!' 'Yes, Swamiji,' said a visitor: your books are so inspiring that those who read them get such a burning desire to pursue the path of Nivritti for attaining their goal, and have no further taste in worldly pursuits or studies.'

That may be. But, I do not encourage juvenile enthusiasm. Often this 'desire to renounce' is a bubble which bursts after some time and vanishes into an airy tell me the very nothing! Adwaitanandaji used to interesting story of his own brother.

This young man suddenly felt himself drawn to Nivritti Marga. He neglected his studies. He used to shut himself up in a room always repeating that the world is false, and other Vedantic ideas. He thought that he had full Vairagya: His family people succeeded in due course in tempting him away from this assumed saintliness: they did this through a woman. This man changed suddenly, married this lady and is now the father of many children.'

Siva generally preaches the glory of the Nivritti Marga and also points out the worthlessness of worldly life. But, if the Sadhaka asks to be initiated into Sannyasa, Siva would quietly advise him to live the divine life in his station in the world and develop Vairagya.

The talk turned to Nivritti Marga. Siva, in serious humour, said:

Oh Raman. What are you thinking now? Will you resign your job and remain here itself?'

'Yes, Swamiji, I can do it: and that was what I was thinking of even now.'

'No, no. Wait for a little while more. Do your work: earn money you have got your mother. Serve her nicely. Do not marry: if you avoid this, you have already registered your place here! Occasionally come here and practise Sadhana. Then, when the time comes, you can make this your permanent abode.'

What a strange spirit! Not the come-here-work-for-me spirit: but the spirit of doing the right thing for the other man.

IMMEDIATE EFFECT

'OM Namo Narayanaya, Judge Saheb, Avo-ji,' greeted Siva.

Judge Gauri Prasadji walked in and with great devotion, bowed to Siva. He handed a cheque to Siva.

'What is this?' asked Siva, rather surprised to see the cheque for Rs. 2000.

'Swamiji, it is for the construction of a Kutir in your Ashram. You see: it happened like this. Day before yesterday night, after you had come and performed your ecstatic Kirtan in my humble Kutir in Swarg Ashram, myself and house-keeper had both wonderful experiences and visions. I had the vision of Light thrice during the night-an indescribably bright Jyoti. And, my grand-daughter-a young girl graduate who was greatly interested in Sankirtan, and who had passed away just a few days ago appeared to my house-keeper in her dream and said, distinctly: 'I want to live with my grandfather. Kindly construct a Kutir for me. I am greatly delighted that you held Swamiji's Kirtan in your house today. I am very happy now. But I want you to construct a Kutir for me.' I know she is fond of Kirtan. In your Bhajan Hall, the Akhanda Kirtan is going on throughout the day. I want a Kutir to be

constructed near the Bhajan Hall so that the girl's soul may find peace there.'

HUMILITY! NOT I, BUT HE!

After the Judge Saheb had left, Siva told me: 'See how the cosmic will works out. That day it was even suggested that we should drop the idea of visiting Swarg Ashram, as it was raining. I would also have agreed: but I felt we should go. So, I told Narayanaswamiji that even if it rained, we should carry out our determination! This girl's soul must have been thirsting for Kirtan. It had to be quenched.' Oh my Siva! Only you knew it: and even Indra shuddered before your vow and withdrew the clouds.

SIVA'S VIRAT NAIVEDYA

To Siva, the whole world is the Virat-everyone is indeed the Lord Himself.

What a delight Siva takes in distributing Prasad! Chimanlal Thakore of Ahmedabad has sent a big parcel of sweetmeats. When this is announced, Siva at once jumps out of the office: 'Bring the Prasad in buckets.'

Padmanabhan is called-for he has been injected by Siva with the same distribution instinct. P. actually is besides himself with joy.

Siva and P. go round the entire Ashram.

'Chimanlal Thakore and Mrs. Lal only know me in this respect. Every year, Mrs. Lal sends a large consignment of mangoes: and Chimanlal these sweetmeats. I cannot give pinches of Prasad to anyone. I must give to MY satisfaction. And, my family is large-so, whoever sends Prasad has to send a lot.'

OM Namo Narayanaya, Swamiji, come here, take this Prasad. 'Patram, Pushpam, Phalam, Thoyam..' Siva greets one by one and

gives handfuls (with his large hand) of the Prasad. Hands are full: but Siva does not stop. Take in that towel.' 'But, Swamiji, I will fall sick.' 'Oh don't worry. I will give you medicine.'

My turn comes. Then Siva reveals to me his secret source of joy. I see Lord Narayana in everyone to whom I give the Prasad. When I give, I actually perform Naivedya to the Lord. I repeat 'OM Namo Narayanaya' when I meet everyone: that makes for Japa. Thus, even this is converted into a potent form of Sadhana. The heart is also developed nicely.'

12th SEPTEMBER, 1948

JNANA GANGA SNANA

Siva stopped before the Kutir in which Sivaramakrishnier was staying and called him for the morning Satsang.

S. said: 'Swamiji, I shall take my bath, perform Sandhya and then come.'

But Siva would not brook delays: S. had to accompany him.

When they were returning from the class, Siva smiled and said: 'Gangasnana is indeed very essential. It destroys your sins. It purifies your body, mind and soul. It invigorates you. You have not lost anything by foregoing your morning bath today. If you had spent your time in bath, etc., you would have missed the morning Satsang.

'Common meditation and Japa are powerful Sadhanas. Individual Sadhana often means lethargy. A few Malas of Japa and then the pillow invites you. Even while you repeat the Mantra, the mind wanders. But, in group meditation, a powerful spiritual current is generated. Everyone is benefited greatly. The mind gets more easily concentrated.'

Yes, Swamiji, and the Vedantic Kirtan that you sang was most inspiring.'

Even ordinary words have great power. They generate two kinds of Vrittis-the Sakthi Vritti and the Lakshana Vritti. When you utter the word milk, you think of its qualities-white colour, liquidity, etc., this is Lakshana Vritti. Then you also think of its uses-it gives health, it is Sattvic food, etc-this is Sakthi Vritti.

'When such is the case with ordinary words, what must be the power of Vedantic formula! When you repeat OM Antaratma, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Nirakara Kutastha, Vyapaka Swayamjyoti Poorna Para Brahma Sakshi Drishta Turiya Santam Sivam Advaitam, the Brahmakara Vritti is raised up in you. You are one day bound to realise the Supreme.

This is Jnana Ganga Snana. It is the most powerful purifier. It at once cleans the Antahkarana and turns the mind inward. When you listen to discourses on Sadhana, your mind receives new, healthy ideas-new Samskaras are formed evil Samskaras are eradicated-your thirst for God is intensified-you are prompted to introspect, find out your own defects and to erase them.

'Ganga Snana is necessary, no doubt. But I only wanted to point out that you should on no account miss a bath in the Jnana Ganga. You can take a bath in the Ganges now. But, if you had missed the morning Satsang, that loss would have been irreparable.'

With a heart full of gratitude, S. prostrated to Siva.

SUBTLE SELFISHNESS

A visitor had failed to attend the morning class. He caught Siva's eye in the morning: and was offering an explanation.

'But, it is not your fault....'

Swami X entered.

'X should have called you, awakened you and taken you with him to the Bhajan Hall. Previously, I myself used to sing OM outside every Kutir, rouse everyone and take all to the morning class.

The visitors will naturally have the Bombay habit of sleeping till 7 a.m. (To X) But you should have awakened them, if necessary, by applying water to their eyes, waited till they got up and taken them to the Bhajan Hall.

'Not only this-you should have prepared the ground the previous night itself. You should have told them about the morning class, about the benefits of common meditation and Japa, about the lectures that they will be able to hear and benefited by-so that they will go to bed with that Sankalpa.

'Selfishness. That is at the root of all this. You want to go on with your own Sadhana and consider such service as this a waste of your time.'

A thorough inner search and analysis of human nature!

MAYA'S SECRET DOOR

With his characteristic candour, Siva listened this morning when our Sastriji was narrating his experiences with other Sannyasins. About one Sannyasin, he was saying:

'Swamiji, this Sadhu never speaks a word. He has taken the vow of Akhanda Mowna. Not only this-he does not come out of his Kutir at all.'

Siva gave a hearty laugh: Then, how to see him?'

'People who wish to have his Darshan one by one gather on the verandah of his Kutir. When he is informed that thirty or forty people have thus collected, he comes to the window of his room on the side of the verandah. Gracefully, he holds up the blind a little aside, so as to provide for the visitors just a glimpse of his

face. He stands in this posture for just a couple of minutes. Then, he again gracefully nods his head and drops the blind.'

That is all! And, a large number of people go there for this much, taking all the trouble?'

'Yes, Swamiji, for, this Sadhu has been living like this for a considerable time now: and his own disciples have naturally woven many stories around his seclusion, Mowna, etc, and deified him, so that the credulous public feel that his Darshan is enough to confer Mukti on them.'

This is all one type of spiritual trade. What is lost if he comes out, talks to people and consoles and inspires them? In a short time, he develops his egoism to a great degree. He cannot respect others: he cannot bow his head before others. He feels that he is a great man. Arrogance, self-conceit, hypocrisy and egoism of the worst sort-all creep into him one by one. He forgets his goal and loses himself in this mad business for acquiring name and fame. I think I can never do this sort of thing.'

'Never, Swamiji, it is just alien to your nature.' Sastriji said to me after Siva had gone away from the office: 'As a matter of fact, Swamiji errs on the other side-he makes himself too freely accessible: he is too outspoken and is able to keep no secrets. He is indeed childlike.'

GOVERNOR-GENERALSHIP vs. SANNYASA

'Jinnah is reported dead, Swamiji. Someone brought the news. Siva was pacing up and down opposite the Diamond Jubilee Hall. Sastriji was near.

'Now, there will be much competition for his post. This will breed hatred, ill-will, quarrels!'

'Surely, Swamiji, everywhere there is jealousy and power politics.'

It is a nuisance to hold these high posts, I think. Your life is in constant danger. So many others covet the job. They try to instigate goondas against you. Why all this trouble, fear and worry? The best thing is to take seclusion on the banks of the Ganges: that is my opinion. There we should do Japa and Dhyana. What do you say?'

'Yes, Swamiji: but how many people have the wisdom to feel so with all their heart?'

POWER OF MAYA

It is very difficult. After many lives of Satsang and Japa only such taste comes. Maya is so powerful. Somebody sits on the banks of the Ganges and does Japa. After some time, he gets tired of it and thinks that 'Eat, drink and be merry' is the greatest philosophy. Maya does not allow him to realise that there can be real joy outside the senses. They are afraid of renunciation. They are afraid of Sadhana. And, even when they take to Sadhana, they expect immediate results.

'Madhusudana Saraswati who has written an inspiring and inspired commentary on the Gita was initiated by his Guru in Gayatri and was asked to do Purascharana. He did so: but nothing happened. His Guru asked him to go on with the Purascharana. After 18 Purascharanas he got the Lord's Darshan. He was learned, saintly, endowed with Deivi Sampath-yet he had to do so much of Japa. Then he realised that the 18 Purascharanas washed away the sins of 18 Brahma-hatyas which he had done in his previous births. Then alone was he fit for His Darshan.

'Such should be every Sadhaka's patience. But nowadays, even a determination to lead a life of renunciation throughout the life is a great thing.'

Siva did Kirtan for the peace of Mr. Jinnah's soul.

FRANKNESS

Sri A. described during the Satsang the magic influence that Siva's pen and personality had brought about in his case. He confessed before a large audience that he had tasted wine, that he was a meat-eater and that he had almost succumbed to the wiles of a girl. He chanced upon some of Siva's inspiring works which once for all turned him to the spiritual path. He took blood out of his own hand and offered it in fire with a firm resolve to give up his evil habits. Even that was not enough to put a stop to the deep-rooted evils. He, then, sat before the picture of his Lord Sivananda-meditated prayed mentally for strength to conquer the evils. The impossible had been achieved within those few supreme moments of his life: devotion to the lotus feet of the Lord and the Guru had been firmly implanted in his heart.

This frankness is a great virtue. It will take a Sadhaka much near to God. What most Sadhakas lack is this sterling quality. Without fear of criticism, without feeling shy to confess one's own defects in public,.....boldly spoke out his past life. Everyone should cultivate this divine virtue,' Siva told us when he came into the office after the Satsang.

14th SEPTEMBER, 1948

NOT ONLY IN NAME

Sri Sankaranarayana Iyer of Nagpur came in and prostrated to Siva.

'OM Namo Narayanaya: what has happened now? You want to leave today?'

I am leaving tomorrow, Swamiji.'

'When you go back, you must make a firm resolve to spread the message of divine life. You must become a dynamic worker in the divine field.'

'With your holy blessings, Swamiji.'

Turning to us, Siva said:

'He belongs to the family of Appayya Dikshitar. It is not a joke to belong to this great saint's line. (To Sri S.) You should show by your own actions that you are worthy of this descent. There is no use merely claiming ancestry to a spiritual hero: you should deserve it.'

'Yes, Swamiji, I shall try my best."

'Study Sanskrit then Gita, Upanishads and Appayya Dikshitar's works also. Then start spreading his message. Be humble and simple. Some people go on tom-toming their ancestry to earn their livelihood. When people see you, they should at once recognise that Appayya Dikshitar's blood runs through your veins. You should possess such exemplary character. Nothing is impossible. If you try, God's grace will also come and you will shine as a true descendent of Appayya.'

15th SEPTEMBER, 1948

NO MUKTI FOR ME

'Sastriji, I think I will never attain Mukti. You see, worldly people are attached to their wife, children, family, property, etc. But, I am attached to service, dissemination of spiritual knowledge. Even if the thought of running away into the forest comes to me, it leaves me the next instant: for, the desire in me to work, work and work, till this body lasts; and to serve the Sadhakas in every way I can-they smother such a desire for seclusion in a trice. What can I do? I think 1 will never get out of this chakra. I will be born again and again in this world, every time to serve the aspirants,' said Siva to Sastriji, during a conversation on birthdays, their significance, the goal of life, etc. Today is Sastriji's birthday.

'But, Swamiji, this thought very rarely comes to even saints. They are concerned only about themselves: and they think that even answering aspirants' letters, or writing books on spiritual matters based on their own experiences, etc., are against their own salvation. The spirit of service that literally possesses you is rarely found in anyone else.'

'But, what about my Mukti?....Achchaji, I should be content to wait till I have served you all to my satisfaction and till you have all attained Mukti. Yes, that is right: I do not want to get Mukti myself till every one leading the divine life gets salvation. Till then, I shall take any number of births and join the Divine Life Society.'

PROPAGANDA IN EUROPE

Menon was gazing at the infinite expanse of azure Unknowable and trying to unravel the mysteries that it contains.

Siva called him: 'OM Namo Narayanaya, Balan Swamiji.'

I am telling Sastriji that I love to do intense work, intense Seva. A little bit of seclusion, meditation and Sadhana is also necessary. See, Lord Jesus did Sadhana in seclusion for thirty years: then he came out and worked intensely for a few years-that was enough to thrill the entire world. In seclusion, you gain inner Adhyatmic strength to revolutionize the entire world-and to do the work of a lifetime within a couple of years.

That is the sort of work that I want you to do in Europe. You should go there and thrill the entire West in a couple of years: a lightning trip to the West. Dr. Atreya has written recently that Europe is more ready for the message of Vedanta than even India, America and England. Europeans are more eager to receive this message and assimilate it. Will you do it?'

'Swamiji, with your blessing and inspiration, anything can be done."

The most important thing is to tell the Europeans now to lead the divine life. Most of them nowadays run after occult powers. That is really not Yoga. They imagine that only one who is able to perform miracles is a Yogi. These powers, when acquired, turn one's head and magnify one's egoism-thus taking one away from God.

'And, when you exhort them to lead the divine life, the idea should not be to ask them to run away from their avocations in life into the Himalayan jungles, there to sit and pray to God. You should tell them in plain language that God is ever within them and that if they do not find Him there, they are not likely to find Him anywhere else.

'Set before them the examples of such illustrious personalities like Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan. He is a learned philosopher. He is the Head of the Department of Philosophy in the Madras University. Besides, he is working day and night for the spiritual uplift of mankind, along with Swami Rajeswaranandaji and others. The wonderful point about him is that Dr. Mahadevan is still a Brahmachari. That gives him marvellous energy. He is ever immersed in philosophy, Advaita Vedanta. Recently, he toured the Andhra districts with some Sannyasins and did wonderful service there. That should be the ideal for Europeans, too.'

'Marvellous ideas you have given me, Swamiji.'

'But....' suddenly Siva's expression turns grave: Balanji anxiously awaits what follows this 'But'.

'But, you have to be careful.'

'Yes, Swamiji, with your blessings.."

...careful, lest you should get absorbed in the West. That is what happens in many cases. The Indians try to imitate the Westerners: and Western culture swallows them. Yesterday, I received a letter from an American lady who says she was born to a Yogi from India.'

'But, Swamiji, so long as you are here to inspire us from within, I have no fear.'

That is why I always insist that those who do social work should once in a way run away to places like Rishikesh: work and seclusion should go hand in hand. You should not 'establish' yourself in Europe. Do intense work for a couple of years: then fly back to India for seclusion and Sadhana. Then again you can go.'

16th SEPTEMBER, 1948

SEAT OF DISEASES

'OM Namo Narayanaya' Siva greeted Shivadayalji.

Shivadayalji was heavily blanketed and was wearing a woolen cap, too.

'Are you not feeling well?'

'No, Swamiji, I am not feeling well for the past two days. Today I have a head-ache and pain in the body, etc' Quickly Siva interrupted him, and turning to Dr. Miss Kamala Korke, said:

Doctorji, This man's heart has come between his lungs. What to do for him? Kindly prescribe something to cure him. (To S.D.) If you are sick, you should approach a doctor.' The entire party-for,

this happened just after the evening Satsanga was over-had a hearty laugh.

S.D. was a little non-plussed. Siva relieved him by saying:

'Beloved Yogiji, throw away that woolen cap first. That is the first medicine. Then the blanket also. These things only produce fever.'

S.D. instantly obeyed: as he was himself a good Sadhaka and a fairly advanced student of Raja Yoga, he at once understood that Siva had gone to the root of the problem and in his own humorous way, pointed out that diseases are rooted in the mind: when the mind is sickly, the body follows suit-and the only way to get rid of disease is to think and feel healthy thoughts.

PENDULANANDA

Brahmachari Jayaramji has come. He was a young and enthusiastic Sadhaka who came all the way from a foreign land to get knowledge of Yoga and Vedanta. After staying for a few days in the Ashram, he left for Vasishta -Guha to remain in seclusion and meditate. He now feels that for active Sadhakas with a special gift for organisation, meditation in seclusion is mere vegetation. His hands have begun to itch for work: and often he thinks of Siva and his dynamic Ashram.

Today he has come to the Ashram on his way to the Post Office on some work. Whenever he goes to Rishikesh, he stays for a little while at the Ashram and looks round his friends in the Ashram and also has Swamiji's Darshan.

When he bowed to Siva, Siva remarked with a mischievous smile: 'Pendulananda', (one who moves to and fro like a pendulum without being able to determine which way to throw his entire weight).

Then he began to discuss with J. the significance of his dances on the Silver Jubilee day, to enquire about Swami Purushotthamanandaji's health, etc. When we were about to run off to the kitchen for Bhiksha, Siva asked me: 'Have you understood?' referring to that pregnant word into which Siva had condensed a world of meaning.

Dedicate yourself to a noble cause, if you are of the active, serving nature. There, try to introspect, to find out your own defects and to eradicate them. Study Gita and compare your own state of mind with that of the Gita-ideal of a Karma Yogi, and try to perfect yourself while yet serving humanity. How can I afford to miss such a precious word from His lips?

A.1 FOR THE HEART

The now enthusiastic Ramachandra Iyer bowed to Siva, sat at his feet and said: 'I will now sing the 'Song of Immanence of Ram', Swamiji.'

Siva listened to the song. R. has a sweet, musical voice. He sings the Maha Mantra beautifully: especially in Brahma-muhurtha the entire locality will be brought to life to his Maha Mantra Kirtan.

When he finished the song, Siva said: 'Fair. That is my certificate.. (to us).. I have got several categories-fair, fairly good, good, very good, marvellous. His recitation is fair. But, Premanandaji has reached the 'marvellous' stage.'

I pondered over this riddle: for, Premanandaji cannot claim to have that sweet musical voice-though, strangely enough, when he sings this 'Song of Immanence of Ram' as also the 'Nama Ramayan', there is a distinct sweetness in his voice.

A look at Gurudev's smiling face dispelled the perplexity. Siva's criterion for judging the standard in these cases is the heart. Real sweetness issues from the heart. However good the voice may be,

if the song does not proceed from the heart, Siva awards it the fair certificate: when the voice is good and the heart is also there, he takes the greatest delight in that song and admires it as marvellous.

PROPHET OF RENASCENT ISLAM

Sri Duncan Greenlees' book 'Gospel of Islam' has been received by Siva from the Theosophical Publishing House, Madras, for being reviewed in the columns of the 'Divine Life'. Sri Haridasji, who had prepared the review, had pointed out that the world today badly needed the unifying force of Islam, with its belief in One God, etc.

The Prophet's teachings are as sublime and worthy of our admiration and following as the teachings of other seer or saint in any other religion. The Prophet taught love, tolerance, understanding and unity. But, strangely enough, under the very banner of the Prophet, the people are killing their brethren.

The teachings of all the seers are misunderstood by the generations which come after them, and join their creed. They twist the teachings to suit their own whims and fancies. Here start misunderstandings.

Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood. Love alone conquers; not hatred. I wish all the followers of the Prophet all over the world re-read the Quran and understand its true import in the proper light. Any religion that degenerates into the level of the animals, adopts the jungle law, and yields to falsehood, hatred, and Adharma, is bound to crash. A Prophet of Renascent Islam will then come to revive the spirit of the Prophet!'

COUNTER-ATTACK

I had recorded Siva's remarks about his own Mukti: and there was a mild breeze over it in the office. Some of us were discussing the significance of his mystic utterance.

Quietly, Siva slipped into our midst, and explained:

'What is there in Mukti? My nature is to serve, serve and to serve forever! I do not long for Mukti. Even great saints and seers who have realised the Supreme and thus liberated themselves from the wheel of birth and death long to come back to the earth-plane-as they often do to serve the suffering humanity and to assist struggling souls on the path to God. I will insist on taking birth after birth to serve you all, and to help aspirants march forward to the Goal.'

'Swamiji, even the gods will be jealous of you, then.'

That is the point. I will defeat Maya in her own realm.

She must cry before Brahma himself that she is undone and that aspirants have started to progress rapidly on the path and the slumberers have been awakened. Then Brahma, out of fright, should give me Mukti.'

'Brilliant idea, Swamiji! Who can understand the glory of service except yourself--the very embodiment of the spirit of service?'

17th SEPTEMBER, 1948

BATTLEFIELD PRATYAHARA

Sri Raman Nambiar and Rajagopalji proved a good channel for Siva's wisdom to flow to you and me, this morning.

The Forest University class was over and there was a discussion about Raja Yoga and Karma Yoga. These two Sadhakas were handy.

'Only those who have not understood properly what Pratyahara means will want to run away to forests and caves. They will live there for some time: and then, when they see some people, they will be greatly upset. When they go into some towns, they will feel something strange.'

Then, what is Pratyahara, Swamiji?' ventured Raman Nambiar.

You should go on doing service. That is the greatest purifier. At the same time, you should be mindful of the purpose of service-the goal of life. Once every hour, for a couple of minutes, you should close your eyes and mentally repeat His Name and meditate. You should feel that you are Akartha, Abhoktha, Sakshi, Satchidananda Atma. Keep a notebook by your side. Write a few Mantras in it: keep a copy of the Gita or other scriptural texts. Read a few lines occasionally. Constantly try to concentrate your mind on the work in hand: and when you meditate, withdraw the mind from this work also and direct all its rays on the Ishtam. Practise and go on practising this. You will soon attain success-Ekagrata. You will be able to withdraw the senses completely-Pratyahara. Afterwards, even if you are in the middle of a battle-field, you will not be disturbed. That is real Pratyahara.'

The disciples bowed in veneration.

SIVA IS ALL

'Panchakshara is the greatest Mantra. Oh, what else do you need? When once you have got Upadesha of Panchakshara, you need not run after any other saint or Sadhu for Upadesha.'

'Swamiji, we only longed to get that assurance from a great Maharshi like you.'

'Go on repeating that. The Lord will bestow all prosperity on you. All your troubles and difficulties will vanish.'

'We are greatly blessed to have such an Ashirvad from Swamiji.'

'Do a lot of Japa of this great Mantra. Do not think that this Mantra or that Mantra is superior to the Panchakshari for the purpose of getting this or that object. For everything, the Panchakshari alone will do. It is the panacea for all ills. Mantra Japa is not like curry or soup. Brinjal soup is tastier than ladies-finger curry.'

All of us had a hearty laugh over the humorous remark.

'Swamiji, we are worshipping Lord Rama also.'

That is very good. Worship and pray to Rama, Krishna, Devi, Narayana, or any other God. See oneness everywhere. Siva Himself is all these. And, Panchakshara is the Omnipotent Mantra. Lord Siva is easily propitiated, and He bestows all prosperity on His Bhaktas.'

The three old ladies-relatives of Swami Paramanandaji in his Poorvashram-greatly enlightened, listen on with rapt attention.

There was an illiterate villager once upon a time.' continued Siva. 'He did not know Rudram and Chamakam; but was anxious to repeat them. He found an easy way of doing it: and went on repeating NAMACHAMA and doing Abhisheka-because he found that there were a lot of Namas and Chamas in Rudram and Chamakam respectively. One day, a pundit saw this: scolded him and asked him to repeat Rudram and Chamakam. The Pundit was at once laid up with a fell disease and was unable to rise. Lord Siva appeared in his dream and said: I was greatly pleased with my devotee's Abhisheka; why have you interfered with it? The pundit at once ran to the devotee and prostrated before him: Oh devotee, kindly go on with your own NAMACHAMA Abhisheka. The Lord is highly pleased with that. I am only an ignorant man: I have now realised that the Lord needs only the

heart. I beg your pardon and went away. The devotee continued as before.'

'O Bhagavan, it is a wonderful illustration. We can never forget this story and your invaluable blessings.'

'I will tell you another story.' All attention everywhere. 'Another Tamil devotee, an illiterate non-Brahmin went on doing Japa of the Panchakshara as 'Namachchivaya'. With the help of this Mantra, he would just walk over the waters of a river as if it were hard ground. One Brahmin noticed this, and thought: if this man is able to do this miracle with the repetition of this Mantra wrongly, what could he achieve if he repeats it properly. So, he requested him to repeat Namahsivaya. The illiterate man had great respect for the Brahmin: so, he adopted this pronunciation. Lo, when he wanted to cross the river, he found that he was sinking in the water. He ran back in fright: then thought over the matter: Why is this; previously I never felt any difficulty. The Lord from within prompted him to repeat the Mantra with faith and Bhava in his own way. He did so and crossed the river.

The Lord wants only your heart. Give it in toto to Him. You will enjoy worldly prosperity and will eventually get Moksha also.'

ROUThey all bowed to Siva and gave him an offering of parched rice, which Siva accepted with profound delight. He sang a Nondichindu song, also describing how a Bhakta devoutly offers to the Lord parched rice and fruits.

THE CLUE: MELTING HEART

Dr. Miss...has come in to take leave of Siva as she is returning today. Siva had a long talk with her on her hospital work, etc. He was all admiration for her skill, service and qualifications. She is an expert in surgery. Suddenly, Siva exclaimed, with a smile: Then, you must have a hard heart! Some people-like our

Paramanandaji-can never become surgeons in their life. P. will faint if he sees one drop of blood.'

In this, Oh my Siva, there is the clue to thy renunciation. Like Buddha's, your heart should have melted at the suffering of the sick. The loving heart of a mother that you have would have paralysed your hand holding the surgeon's knife. Thy keen vision should have pierced the flesh, the wound, the worn-out body, and perceived the Cause of Suffering: these Sacred Lessons learnt direct from the most holy of scriptures--the Book of Life-should have implanted themselves firmly and deeply in thy heart-have I not seen that even a baby's wise remark literally seizes you till your own inner self weaves around it the highest wisdom? Manana and Nididhyasana on these lessons has obviously left you in Rishikesh in seclusion, in hard and strenuous Tapasya. Glory to Siva!

When Dr... was leaving, Siva rose from his seat and with folded palms, said: 'Please come again when you commence your private practice.'

A SILENT SADHAKA

When the doctor had left, Siva said: 'Oh Sridhar Swamiji, this doctor is a very good Sadhaka. Very rarely she wrote to me. But, silently she has been doing wonderful Sadhana. She has been very regular in Mantra writing. Look at these volumes of Mantra writing books! And, she has been quietly maintaining the spiritual diary. How humbly she places these diaries on my table! She has a very good heart also. Even during her stay here, she has done good work here and has saved Suresh's life.' Such are Siva's disciples.

THE ETERNAL PRESENT

Swami Shanmuganandaji joined Siva even while he was working in the Army: full of dispassion and discrimination, devotion and faith, he was more other-worldly than worldly. He was leading the household life with the constant yearning in the heart to renounce it at the earliest moment. The job, family, everything in the world was like coals of fire to him.

He resigned and joined Siva's mission. Soon he was initiated into Sannyasa: for even in the Army, he was considered more as a Pujari and Sadhu than as an Army-clerk.

Someone brought to the notice of Siva that an Ordinance had been promulgated which might make it necessary for all ex-Servicemen to rejoin Military Service. Siva remarked:

'Sannyasins are, of course, exempt. They have renounced the world. They have enrolled themselves for the Supreme Adhyatmic battle. They are determined to rout out the internal enemies, million-fold more formidable than many battalions of the external army-Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, ignorance-with the aid of the Divine Atmic Bomb.'

'Of course, Sannyasins will be exempted from the operation of the Ordinance, Swamiji.'

'So, Shanmuganandaji has been saved, I think. He is a pious soul full of devotion to the Lord. So, He saved him in time.'

O Lord Sivananda! It is you who saved him from the unpleasant task of going against his own conscience: for you gave him Sannyasa last Skanda Sashthi day, even disregarding several objections voiced by others at initiating him so early.

Shanmuganandaji has also told me how he was mysteriously helped by someone even during his army career, and how he would be posted to places and jobs which would allow the fullest

scope for the development of his devotion to Him. That someone is indeed Sivananda.

WHAT CAN A BEGGAR RENOUNCE?

Rajagopalji was introduced to Siva as an expert in embroidery. The ever-appreciative Siva was listening to the adventures of Rajagopalji who renounced a lucrative military job (he was earning about 400), renounced his family, property and all for practising Yoga at the lotus feet of Siva. 'Is that so? Everyone here has been a great Tyagi, I think. Every one is a Buddha. Renouncing great positions, good pay, vast properties, good family. Oh, marvellous! What do these worldly people know about renunciation? Where else in the world can you find such youngsters with such burning Vairagya and Mumukshutwa, who have renounced worldly good fortunes to lead the life of Nivritti?'

FIT TO BECOME PREMIERS

'And,' continued Siva, as we all just locked on wonderstruck, 'Even if some of the youngsters go back to the world, I think they can be given only the job of Prime Ministers or Governors.'

True: and that is the efficiency which the young Sadhaka acquires under Siva's tutorship. Waste not a second: for that second will never be given back to you. That is Siva's stern advice to one and all. Put your heart and soul into any work you do: and when you have done it, detach yourself completely and identify yourself with the Atma who is Akarta, Abhokta, Sakshi-that is the golden advice he gives to all Sadhakas. These lessons are worth even the world leaders' learning.

APARIGRAHA

Sri Atmaramji is accompanying Dr. K. till Hardwar and will come back tomorrow. He came to take leave of Siva.

'Have you arranged for the tonga?' began Siva and went through the entire process of verifying that every detail with regard to the arrangements for their safe departure had been attended to.

'Oh Padmanabha Swami, Kindly give Atmaramji whatever money he wants for his trip to Hardwar.'

'Swamiji, I have already taken money from the Secretary,' assured Atmaramji.

That is very good. Even if the guest offers your train fare and expenses, you should not take.'

True spirit of a Yogi-Aparigraha in action!

ANY SERVICE?

In the evening, R.L. came to the Ashram: he was leaving for Delhi today.

He had previously taken 200 copies of 'Bhakti Yoga': today he is taking several sets of 'Mind, Its Mysteries and Control', Parts I and II. He was waiting in the office with his big packet of books. Siva came and the leave-taking ceremony was well in hand.

Finally, Sri R.L. asked Siva: 'Can I be of any service to you in Delhi?'

'What service? Know thyself and be free. That is the greatest service you can do to me.'

A HUNDREDFOLD, WELL SHAKEN AND PRESSED DOWN

Padmanabha Swami, pay for the bread-wallah.' Siva sat down on his chair after a breathless quarter hour of helping a stray bread-vendor to dispose of his burden. I was myself one of the beneficiaries, and a specially blessed one. Everyone who met Siva's eyes got his share: several others were served in absentia, too. In all, nearly fifty loaves of bread were served to all. I

thought Siva's hands were 'free' only when it came to a question of distributing offerings brought by devotees: but, no, even when the 'Prasad' (for that is the term used for all that he gives) involves expenditure, his hands do not shrink.

'Swamiji, that visitor from Ambala has paid off the entire amount of the bill,' replied Padmanabhan.

'Who? Dwaraka Singji?'

P. nodded assent: Siva was silent.

This Dwaraka Singhji was one of the persons who was blessed by Siva with the bread-Prasad: he was practically the last person to receive it. Immediately, after giving a loaf to Dwarakaji, Siva came into the office. Before P. could take the money to the bread-vendor, Dwarakaji had enquired about the amount to be paid, and had sent away the vendor.

I was rather upset at Siva's silence. What? Not a remark in regard to this remarkable event? And, even when D.ji came in to have Darshan, not a word was exchanged between the two about the incident.

The gift of one loaf paid off the cost of fifty loaves, Swamiji', I quietly ventured a comment.

'How?' was just an impassioned query, with his eyes half looking at me and half at the letters on the table.

'Swamiji, Dwaraka Singhji may be a noble soul, and may have a charitable temperament. But he would not have known that we owe some money to that bread-vendor if Swamiji had not offered a loaf to Dwarakaji, too. Otherwise, he might have simply ignored the bread-vendor sitting on the road. And, Swamiji's all-giving nature seems to be infectious, too, especially with pure, noble souls. That is what should have prompted him to pay off the bread-vendor immediately and without ostentation.'

Siva merely smiled. I continued: 'Swamiji, I think, that is the secret of Swamiji's great and unequalled achievement in building up such a huge organisation in so short a time.

From the very start, Swamiji has gone on giving and giving freely, with a loving heart. Each gift, even of a small pamphlet costing a couple of annas, of almonds and raisins worth half a rupee, has invited a thousand fold return.

Again Siva smiled. It is all news to him. The sun does not know that he shines, for he has never seen darkness.

'Perhaps you are right. Yes, yes. See, Dwarakaji has taken a good consignment of books today. I gave him on the first day he met me, a couple of books free, as a gift.'

'We should not give with any motive,' continued Siva, or with the expectation of a return. I give because I cannot help giving. Everything is His: and He Himself directs the gift from within, to deserving persons and causes. Always glorify Him.'

Yes: I will. When I glorify God, I glorify my own God-Siva.

18th SEPTEMBER, 1948

PRECEPT THROUGH PRACTICE

Today's subject for the Forest University class was 'Practical Sadhana'. Sridharji delivered an inspiring discourse on the subject of 'Conscience' with his characteristic eloquence, soul-force, and sparkling wisdom. Among other things he had told us that a fully developed conscience which had been guarded against perversion, misuse, disuse, abuse, etc., is the surest guide which an aspirant to Self-realisation could have, as it represents in the court-hall of mind, its (conscience's) absent royal master (the chosen ideal of the aspirant, viz., Self-realisation through Nivritti Marga), in an ambassadorial capacity, raising his voice of protest whenever

anything is said, thought of or done contrary to the interests of his Master.

After Siva's inspiring Kirtan which invariably concludes the class for the day, we dispersed.

Outside the Bhajan Hall, someone of the gathering raised the topic of wars, and the possibility of a war in which India might be involved--the discussion leading to the topic of conscription, etc. Siva, innocent of politics, exclaimed:

Then all the young men will be recruited to the Army?'

Sridharji then explained the implications of conscription in detail.

Siva (with a mixed expression of pity and contempt): 'It is a great pity. Every young man will become military-minded: and the conduct of such young men, even after the war will be tinged with brutality, arrogance and materialistic ambitions and passions. India's spiritual heritage will be jeopardised. No, no: India should stick to her spirituality.'

Siva's conscience or background of thought is established in divine life, and all ideas and ideals are evaluated on this touchstone.

Incidentally, in Sridharji, too, this virtue is highly developed. In fact, I have not seen any other 'Sadhaka' who can approach a 'Siddha' in the matter of possessing the keenest intellect, coupled with a fully developed vigilant conscience: and in allowing the very experiences of his soul, the strength of conviction gained through careful exercise of the withdrawn-limbs of his mind on the field of introspection, intense Antaranga Sadhana and Tapasya, express themselves through his highly inspiring and impressive discourses.

DIRECT REALISATION OF BRAHMAN

True, Swamiji, I have heard that said before. I have read this in the scriptures, too. But I want to have the direct experience. I must actually realise Brahman. Otherwise, how am I to know that what the Upanishads declare is truth?' replied Sri Satya Sandan, a young Yogi-enthusiast who wished to know the direct road to Moksha. Siva had told him The direct path is Jnana Yoga. Practise it. Read the scriptures. Realise Aham Brahmasmi.' I have myself never heard Siva reply in this manner to anyone: he usually adopts the step-by-step method, and preaches Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and the Yoga of Synthesis. There is something behind this, I thought: and looked up.

You will have to sit quiet and meditate. Go on meditating on the true import of the Mahavakya till you actually realise the Truth.'

'But, Swamiji, I want to guard myself against falling into the snares of mere hallucinations-and this Aham Brahmasmi assertion might also be a hallucination!'

That is the trouble. What the great, seers and sages have said cannot be false. But, why does man not realise the Truth easily? The scriptures say that there are three kinds of obstructions to the perception of this Truth. First is Mala (impurities), second is Vikshepa (oscillation of the mind), and the third is Avarana (veil of ignorance). Introspect and find out which of these you have got. If you find you have Mala-Kama, Krodha, Lobha,-you will have to eradicate it through the practice of Karma Yoga, or the Yoga of Selfless Service. If you have only got Vikshepa, you have to practise Upasana to steady the mind. If you have only Avarana, you will have to practise Nididhyasana or constant dwelling on the import of the Mahavakyas, till the Truth flashes within you.'

'Swamiji, I am not interested in all these. I only want direct realisation of Brahman.'

That is like a clerk wanting to become a Commisioner. He has to work hard, get quick promotions, pass stage after stage, examination after examination: and then only can he aspire to become a Commissioner. Can a Matriculate at once become an I.C.S. officer? He has to graduate in the University: then he has to work hard and get through the I.C.S. examination: only then can he become an I.C.S. officer.

'Similarly, you have first to acquire the Sadhana Chatushtaya Sampathi...'

What is that, Swamiji?'

You have not even heard of that! Viveka or discrimination between the Real and the Unreal; Vairagya or dispassion towards worldly objects; then Shad Sampathi -Sama, Dama, Titiksha, Uparathi and Sraddha and Samadhana--and Mumukshutwa or a burning desire for liberation. Then you should approach someone and learn the Truth from him. That is what Lord Krishna has also said in the Gita: Tad Viddhi Pranipatena Pariprasnena Sevaya Upadekshyanti Jnanam Jnaninah Tatwa-darshinah.'

'Yes, Swamiji, I have read this.' 'No use merely reading it: you should put into practice what you know. You do not want to develop divine virtues. But, you want direct realisation of Brahman at once...silence...This is all no good. O ji! Please approach some good Mahatma, live with him, serve him and learn. Do not try to become Swayam Siddha Mahatma, Swayamprakashananda!'

'May I stay with you, Swamiji?'

'As you like! But here, all the aspirants are persons who have a clear grasp of the task before them. So, they engage themselves in the practice of the Yoga of Synthesis. They combine nicely work, worship, study, Yoga, etc. If you can also fall in line with them,

you can stay. Or, seek some good Mahatma; serve him and learn to meditate.'

20th SEPTEMBER, 1948

SAMBHAR IN THE HIMALAYAS

Sri Sankaranarayana has returned to the Ashram from a visit to several places of seclusion, away from Rishikesh. Siva asked him, with maternal affection: '

Are there any shops on the way?'

'Swamiji, the Sadhu whom we met, gave us some roties to take with us: and when we went, we had taken some fruits, etc., from here itself.'

'And, there?'

There, Swamiji? We had a sumptuous meal.'

'What food?'

'Sambhar, rice, roti, ghee-a pucca Madrassi dinner, Swamiji.'

Everyone present expressed mild surprise.

There is a cow also, Swamiji. So, we got good milk.'

That is the secret. Wherever you go, there you will find Sambhar, idli and coffee. The body of even a Jnani needs certain things. You cannot run away from them. The secret of renunciation is renunciation of attachment. Prakriti has her play, so long as her instruments-the body and mind-are there. The Jnani dissociates himself from the Koshas; identifies himself with the Akarta and Abhokta Atman.

That is also the secret of Karma Yoga. We also work here. But we have found out the secret process by which we are able to convert work into worship.'

A spell of silence-the calm before the storm.

WHY RENOUNCE?

'If we had known this trick before, we need not even have come here.'

Everyone looks at the others: general bewilderment: what a strange thing to say!

THE SOLUTION

Siva at once realised the cause of the consternation. 'But, if we had not come here, away from the bondage of family and relation, properties and possessions, etc., we could not have found out the secret.'

We all felt a bit relieved.

'Renunciation is absolutely necessary. Once you recognise Maya and her mischief, and pierce through the veil, find out the inner antidote to Maya's poisons-then you are able to live under all circumstances, unaffected.'

GOD vs. BHAKTAS

A batch of visitors has arrived.

Siva was asking several Ashramites to attend to the several affairs connected with their lodging, etc.

Someone said that the Sadhaka who had the key of a particular room was meditating in his room.

'What meditation is this? You must first fulfil your duties and then meditate. He should have kept the keys outside and then shut himself up. Look, how many people God be pleased by are inconvenienced. How can meditation, when you keep His devotees waiting outside?'

SERVE HUMANITY

Sri Rajagopala Iyer who has come from South India, was narrating to Siva the activities of Sri Ram Ram Ram, an old school-mate of Siva, who is now a retired surgeon: a widely travelled man with a number of foreign degrees and a lot of money.

'Swamiji, now-a-days, he has more or less retired.'

'What is there in retirement now? Has he established some hospital or clinic for the sake of the suffering humanity?'

'No, Swamiji: he has done a lot of service while he was in the Army.'

'But, none of a permanent value. He must now do something which will make his name immortal. He has earned a lot. He must now invest a portion of that money in charity. The idea of doing something substantially good to humanity never strikes many people.

'Please ask him on my behalf to construct a ward in the local hospital in his name and provide for a few beds also. This will be a great blessing to humanity.

'He can himself serve there so long as he wishes: even after his life-time, the ward will ever proclaim his name and philanthropy. What is the use of money unless every pie is directed to some good cause?'

Then the talk turned to his personal affairs.

'He spends a lot of money. But he himself leads a very simple life.'

'H'm? That is marvellous and unique-that he has kept up Indian simplicity even after his European tours and luxurious life,' complimented Siva.

'He has a cook, Swamiji. But in those parts, the cooks hardly stay on, Swamiji.'

Siva's nature at once sprang forth.

'He should pay the cook well-and he should give the cook the same food as he takes, if not even better. Then no cook will ever leave him. It all depends upon the treatment; you must make the servants feel they are members of the family.'

That is exactly what Siva has been doing all his life-in Malaya and in the Himalaya.

21st SEPTEMBER, 1948

ALL RELIGIONS ARE ONE

Sri Rajagopala Iyer was talking to Siva about the proselytising missions. Siva summed up:

'What is in this? A Christian comes, gives you a Bible and converts you into Christianity: a Mohammadan gives you a copy of the Quran and changes you into a Mohammadan: a Hindu has his Gita for the same purpose.'

What a fund of wisdom!

Truth is one: all the scriptures expound this Truth, though in different words. What purpose can ever be served by these proselytisers? They only change man's external cloak, a few of his habits. Can they ever go near the Atman, the Eternal Sakshi? Only dull-witted people engage themselves in such missions. Wise men will only seek to strengthen the individual's faith in his own religion.

THE IDEAL ASHRAM

Two gentlemen from Bihar prostrate to Siva. They have come in search of a young man who had suddenly disappeared from his

home. They had been to Hardwar, Rishikesh. And, at both places, they had been directed to Sivanandashram. They represented their 'case' to Siva.

'No, Maharaj, he has not come here.'

'Swamiji, we have searched for him in Brindavan, Mathura, Banaras, etc. We do not know what to do.'

'Maharaj, it is impossible to find out a missing boy by searching like this. Go home and pray for him. He will knock about here and there and ultimately come back to the house."

A letter was on Siva's table, from Sri T.A. Rama Row of Madras enquiring about another boy who had also disappeared like this.

When a boy leaves home with a spiritual aspiration at heart, his mind naturally seeks solace. Whether the Vairagya is real or momentary, he needs peace, solace and proper guidance. It seems, from the number of letters, enquiries and interviews that Siva has to answer, that the youth of India has found out that Siva's abode alone can give them all that they need.

SAVED BY MERE SIGHT

Siva was returning from his walk up to the Mandir, in the evening. As he came near the Yajnashala, one of the small children belonging to the family of Sri Panna Lalji, who was playing on the roof of the Yajnashala rooms, slipped off the terrace and fell right into one of the empty packing cases placed near the wall of the Yajnashala. Siva called out to the parents of the child. They ran down and found that the child had almost swooned. Siva reached the spot: and gazed at the child for a moment. The parents took the child into their hands and called it by its name. Lo, the child cried for a couple of minutes, and jumped out of their hands to run about again.

22nd SEPTEMBER, 1948

THE ASSURANCE

Sri T.R. Bhagat of New Delhi, an apparently genuine Sadhaka has written to Siva asking several questions on Sadhana. Siva clears all his doubts without leaving one loose-end, adds his own precious advice, ending up with:

I have accepted you as my beloved disciple. I shall serve you nicely. Be true, earnest and diligent in your Sadhana.'

The cream, the essence-meditation on which alone is sufficient to bestow Moksha on a Sadhaka.

'Be true': what a precious piece of instruction! How few are really true in their Sadhana, and do not practise Yoga merely for the sake of exhibition!

'Earnest': Yoga is not for the Sadhaka who takes to it half-heartedly.

'Diligent': the third most important preliminary qualification. Not only earnestness, but diligent application is also wanted.

With all this exacting instruction is mixed the most encouraging assurance:

I have accepted you as my beloved disciple.'

'Beloved': what more does one want?

and

I shall serve you nicely': that is unique-Guru serving the disciples. A sage, a Brahma-Nishtha, a living God, at your service and waiting for you to turn to him.

THE INNER RULER

The clock struck five. It was drizzling-after a heavy downpour.

'Wake up: get out of bed: quick, run', said someone from within.

I rose. What is this hallucination? I peeped out of the room half-heartedly-

I had a slight head-ache, too, due to biliousness. It was still drizzling.

'No, there won't be the morning class today,' I thought. The aching head sought the pillow.

'Do not let the mind have its own way. Run out of the room. If you find there is no class, go to the temple and meditate.' Irresistible command!

I rubbed my eyes. Peeped out again: is it Siva?

Yes: it is Siva, my Redeemer-no, not from outside, but from within.

I ran up.

Twice Siva glanced at me-Perhaps, to make sure that I had obeyed.

TOO OLD AT TWENTY-FIVE

Sri Aravamudan did not attend. Siva met him on his way back to his Kutir.

'Why did you not come?'

'I was a bit lazy this morning, Swamiji.'

'Very well: if you are lazy enough at 25 not to be able to check it and come up to the Bhajan Hall-at 50 you will want a palanquin and four coolies to transport you."

I was convinced that it was Siva who had awakened me in the morning.

VEDANTIN?

Siva was talking about the glory of Kirtan and Bhakti. Swami X came in his view.

'But, you are a Vedantin? Are you not?'

Swami X was silent.

'Ohji, so long as the necessity for food exists, Vedantic indifference should not be assumed. When that need stops, then one can say 'I am Brahman' and leave off every other Sadhana.

'But some Vedantins deceive themselves and others, and say-this is body-Dharma. And, go on eating.

What a pity: when they get angry, they will say it is Mano-Dharma. When they lose their temper and belabour someone, they will say it is Hand-Dharma-it is Indra who did it, not I, the Akarta Atman.'

Vedantic realisation,' Siva continued, 'should come by itself when the heart is purified through the practice of Karma Yoga and steadied through devotion.'

NON-COMMUNALIST

The food bell is given.

'Vishnuji,' called Siva. Take Sri John D'Cruz with you and see that he is accommodated in the Panghat. Is he also taking his food in the dining hall?'

Yes. Swamiji.'

That is right. In this Ashram, there should be no communal feeling, no caste or creed distinctions. Christian, Mohammadan, Parsee all should move amicably together, eat together, pray together, without any distinction whatsoever.'

SONGS FROM STRANGE QUARTERS

The evening Satsang had just commenced.

I had just finished reciting the Gita Dhyana Slokas. I heard a sweet humming of a melodious tune. I held my breath and listened. Yes, it is Siva. My thoughts flew back to Lord Krishna's days when the love-mad Gopis would sit enraptured in their houses enjoying the exclusive privilege of receiving Lord Krishna's Murali-Dhwanis. Vishnuji, sitting by my side, was eager to know what had happened to me: I continued reading the Gita.

SIVA'S ECSTATIC KIRTAN

Satsang was almost over. Siva sang the following Kirtan for a full half-hour. Repeating several lines over and over again...each repetition ringing with more and more intense ecstatic fervour, the notes emanating from Siva piercing into the very hearts of the devotees assembled. I cannot explain what it was.

Ananda Thene	Brahmananda Thene
Thene Thene	Thene Thene
Thene Thene	Thene Madhuve
Thene Thene	Thene Honey-ye
Celestial Honey-ye	Divya Madhuve
Ananda Thene	Brahmananda Thene
Adwaita Thene	Anubhava Thene
Chinmaya Thene	Chinmatra Thene
Chinmaya Thene	Chidghana Thene
Nirakara Thene	Nirvishesha Thene
SankaraAnubhava Thene	Dattanubhava Thene
Sivoham Thene	Soham Thene
Soham Soham Thene	Sivoham Thene
Sivoham Thene	Swaroopoham Thene
Ananda Thene	Brahmananda Thene

OBEISANCE TO HONEY

All of us were in an entirely different plane for quite a long time after this music.

In the office, in bed-everywhere I could hear Siva's ecstatic music. Why this Thene' song today-Thene' in Tamil means 'honey'? I mused.

The solution was not long in being arrived at. Instead of sugar, Siva should have used honey today-as an anti-diabetic measure. And, Siva lives in Sahaja Samadhi: he sees Brahman in all and all in Brahman. Every object, every person, every word inspires from within him only thoughts of Brahman and Brahmic Bliss. Wherever he is, in the bath-room, the water-closet, on the banks of the Ganges, in the office, in the temple, on the road-this one consciousness alone is his constant companion.

Oh honey! Prostrations unto thee! I am grateful to you, for through your grace, we all enjoyed Siva's ecstatic Kirtan today. Glory to thee!

23rd SEPTEMBER, 1948

SIVA IS WORSHIPPED

Sri P.S. Natesa Iyer performed Pada Puja to Siva this morning. Vishnudevji had delightfully decorated the whole of the Verandah outside Siva's Kutir, and a couch for Siva, too.

Siva came in after his bath and quietly sat on a wooden plank placed on the floor. No amount of persuasion would make him occupy the decorated chair. The simpler, the better,' was his only reply.

When the Archana was being performed with Sivananda Ashtottarasatanama Stotram with faith and devotion, Siva sat on gazing at the Ganges and the Himalayas in front, entirely detaching himself from his physical sheath. His inner consciousness had identified itself with the Cosmic

Consciousness, the Para Brahman. Blessed indeed is Sri Natesa Iyer for, by worshipping Siva, he had in truth worshipped Para Brahman Himself.

WHAT A GURU

Narayanaswamiji and Venkatesanandaji will take their food here, with me,' Siva told Sri Govindaswamiji.

And, the leaves were spread. 'Where is Narayanaswamiji?' He had left for his bath, etc.

Venkatesanandaji, sit down here by my side.'

What a Guru is my Siva! He has not the slightest trace of Gurudom in him. It does not even strike him that it is out of place for him to sit with his own disciples and eat. I prayed to Siva mentally for a way out.

'Come on, won't you sit down?'

Swamiji, I shall first serve and then take food.'"

Granted!

As soon as he finished his meal, he went into the kitchen, assured himself that there was food enough for all of us, and would not leave the kitchen till he was certain that we would take our food there.

OUR DESIRE GRANTED

All the time, Sri Vishnuji's eyes and mind were riveted on the chair decorated for Siva.

'Wait.' Siva walked towards the chair. I shall sit on this for a few minutes at least to satisfy Vishnuji. How nicely he has decorated this chair!' He sat on it.

This is all mere show. All this Puja and 'Vada Payasam' (some of the special food preparations which always go with such

occasions) only increase one's vanity. These things have started to invade me also: I am now in the danger zone. What do you say?'

What can we say? Can Maya or vanity, ever approach Siva who is Satchidananda and the very incarnation of humility and egolessness?

Then Siva indulged in a little innocent fun concerning the Archana Mantras: The pundit who composed these should have consulted me: I would then have given many more!'

All the time Siva, too, had taken a keen interest in the proceedings as though the Puja was done to someone else, he himself being one of the participants in the worship.

EVEN A CHILD DESERVES CONSIDERATION

During the evening Kirtan, Sri Venkateswarji's child got up from beside his mother and was walking towards the men's group. Siva at once understood the purpose of the child's movements and flashed his torch in such a way that the child could at once see whether his father was among those seated there or not. What a consideration this mighty sage shows even to a small child! Siva sees God in all, and relieving the child's anxiety is to him more important than meditation.

OLD ACQUAINTANCE

'OM Namo Narayanaya, Torrenton Advocate Saheb,' greeted Siva even before Sri Amir Chandji of Torrenton had entered the office.

You first met me when I was in Rishikesh,' Siva kindled the Advocate's memory.

'Yes, Swamiji, that was in 1924.'

'Are you having a good practice now? How is your family, children? How is your health?' so on Siva showered his loving enquiries on the visitor, and got the one reply: Everything is all

right and everyone is keeping quite fit, only by thy grace, Maharaj.' And, insisted on again and again placing his head at the feet of Siva.

'What is it, Maharaj-ji! You have retired from active life. Now, you should spend all your time in Sadhana. Take Sannyasa.'

'Swamiji, what shall I say? Even Moha for the family does not leave me. How can I embrace Sannyasa now? By thy grace only I should get Vairagya.'

You previously told me that you were doing some Upasana?' Kindled Siva the memory of the Advocate's past Sadhana.

'Yes, Swamiji, long long ago, I was inspired by your book on Japa Yoga Sadhana. From the very minute I perused the book, I took to the repetition of Gayatri Mantra. Another swamiji whom I met also greatly encouraged me in this: he said that your word should be taken as gospel truth, as God's commands. I performed six Purascharanas of the Gayatri Mantra, too.'

'Six Purascharanas? Wonderful, you should have long ago attained Chitta Suddhi. You are then already a Sannyasi. Gayatri is the greatest of all Mantras. And, even one Purascharana is difficult to perform: it is a wonder how you were able to perform six Purascharanas.'

'But, Swamiji, the impurities inside were perhaps too much for even six Purascharanas.'

That is a great achievement, indeed. Even now, you should go on repeating the Gayatri Mantra. You should not give it up till you achieve the goal, God-realisation.'

'Surely, I will, Swamiji.'

Siva later arranged for Amirchand's food, etc. Amirchandji left. Then, Siva said: This Advocate met me in 1924 and gave me five

rupees. That was just after I had come to Rishikesh. Living on Bhiksha, on dry roti and dhal, was all new to me. As soon as I got the money, I ran to a shop and ate Jalebi to my heart's content.'

This brought to my mind a passage from Siva's writings:

'For the first time I received Rs. 5 from him (Pundit Chand Narain Harkuli) for my milk and I printed the leaflet 'Brahma Vidya' out of this money through Messrs. G.A. Natesan and Co., Madras.'

The transition from the Siva who met Advocate Amir Chandji to the Siva who met Pundit Chand Narainji is beautifully, inspiringly sketched by Sri Sridharji (Swami Chidanandaji) in his book 'Light Fountain'. Through what austerities, through how many crucibles this gold Siva has passed himself through before he completely transformed himself into the priceless mystic metal which reflects God in all His glory (into Divinity Itself) is graphically portrayed there.

24th SEPTEMBER, 1948

SUPREME CONTENTMENT

A devotee had suggested that Sri Chakra Puja with all the formalities and rituals should be performed in the Ashram, for the sake of wealth (he felt that the income of the Ashram was quite inadequate for the turn out of work, and for the full manifestation of Siva's own inner dynamism.)

'Sri Chakra worship is, no doubt, good,' replied Siva. 'As we worship Siva, Krishna, Rama, we may also do formal Puja to Devi, too. But, not for the sake of money. Why, we are already getting enough money even without these Pujas!'

'But, Swamiji, the expenditure always exceeds the income. And, if we had lakhs, even then the expenditure will also increase, but Swamiji's Satsankalpa will all be fulfilled.'

WHERE IS LORD SIVA

'Worship should always be simple, with Bhava, devotion, unhindered by unnecessary rules, rituals and formalities. It should be such that one can perform the Puja after a mere washing of hands and feet.'

'Swamiji, I have heard it said that Sri Vidya Upasaka's life has been completely transformed after his initiation, and his financial position greatly improved.'

'Cannot Lord Siva give us all wealth? Cannot Lord Rama give us, or Lord Krishna? Why, Lord Siva has been so much agitated through the powerful Rudri chants at the Viswanath Mandir that he has run away from Kailas and Banaras and taken His abode at the Ashram temple. Devi worship is good. But, do not do it with a desire to increase our wealth. If the Lord so desires, He will fill the Ashram with gold. Kubera himself is already in charge of our finances, because we are doing His work.'

At the close of tonight's Satsang, Siva did Kirtan for the peace of the departed soul of Sri K. Narayana Iyengar of Palamcotta, Tinnevelly, news about whose departure had been received in the afternoon.

Sho We shall do Kirtan for the departed soul of K. Narayana Iyengar of Tinnevelly. Sri Narayana Iyengar was a very good soul, pious, devoted and sincere. He was here a few days ago: and he went to Kedarnath and Badrinath this year. He has rendered great service to the cause of divine life. He took with him books and Ayurvedic Pharmacy products. He wanted to popularise them. He had established a Press in Tinnevelly also. More than anything else, he has been trying to introduce these books in the Board Schools in the Tinnevelly district. He was a very noble soul, with good spiritual Samskaras. He had withstood severe shocks in his life and had preserved his equanimity in the face of

trials and tribulations of family life. After all, body is not immortal. Narayana Iyengar's soul would surely progress towards the Eternal. He will surely become immortal. Kalenatmani Vindathi. It is all a question of time. So, let us pray for the peace of his soul.'

Every kind of emotion was perceptible in Siva during this short speech. Admiration, sympathy, compassion, courage, and the firm conviction that the Atma, the real Self, is undying.

Nothing is dearer to Siva than a devotee of the Lord. It is for the devotees' sake that he lives, breathes, eats, and above all, works ceaselessly and tirelessly. May our Siva live long to protect us!

25th SEPTEMBER, 1948

PLUS ONE

An old South Indian couple was on a visit to Rishikesh.

They had stayed in the Ashram for a few days, and were leaving for South India. After a trip to Lakshmanjhula, they came into the office and prostrated before Siva.

How do you like these places? Did you enjoy your trip to Lakshmanjhula? Did you see all the places?'

Yes, Swamiji, wherever I go in Rishikesh, I find immense peace of mind. I have never enjoyed this peace before. This Ashram is full of peace and bliss. There is no place like this anywhere in India. When I think of the happiness that we derived here, my mind yearns to settle down here itself."

'What about your family?'

I have no one else,' replied the lady. 'Only we two. He has also retired long ago. We lead a lonely life. There is no hindrance. We can easily come and settle down here. He has already transferred

his pension papers to Dehra Dun. We shall go to South India only to wind up the family affairs, and then come here once for all.'

'H'm, there is no one else for you?'

'No, Swamiji, only we two.'

'But, you have forgotten the third member of your family-God. He is your constant companion. You can never be absolutely alone. God is always with you.'

EGOISM: SACRED AND SECULAR

In the course of a conversation, one of the visitors referred to an old acquaintance of Siva, and said: 'He has now fifteen cars, Swamiji, and he is rolling in wealth.'

Quick came the reply: 'What good is all this? Only to increase his vanity.' Turning to us: The other form is: I have performed six lakhs of OM Namahsivaya Japa.'

All these Abhimanas have to be ruthlessly shunned.

BMY LORD CALLS

I have heard it said by many Sadhu contemporaries of Siva in his Swarg Ashram days, that even if he had shut himself up in his Kutir engrossed in spiritual practices, Siva could at once be brought to his heels at the least sign of suffering in the neighbourhood. To him, God was more profoundly manifest in the afflicted patient outside than anywhere within the four walls of his own Kutir.

Blessed are you, my eyes, for you have witnessed the veracity of this statement.

Siva was deeply engaged in conversation with his European devotees, in Ramashram.

What?...The wail of a mother...The Lord's Call....Siva at once lost all interest in the conversation. Thither he rushed....as indeed the cow will run at the bellow of her calf.

He knelt before the patient. At once the patient felt great relief. She stopped crying. She explained her condition. Labour pains, was Siva's quick diagnosis.

'Get Sridharji quickly...Run.' One Ashramite had been despatched. 'Fetch a tonga immediately...' There goes another. A third to the kitchen.

After some initial treatment, the lady was at once despatched to the Rishikesh Hospital. The husband of the lady had obviously enough money with him. But Siva's solicitude is blind to these uncomfortable (only to him!) facts. Padmanabhanji came running with a ten-rupee note which Siva-as though in duty bound-handed to the husband. The tonga had arrived.

All within ten minutes. And, the lady was in the hospital within an hour of Siva hearing the weeping sound!

She delivered a child a few minutes after admission into the hospital.

26th SEPTEMBER, 1948

WATCH, BROTHER, AND LEARN

I had gone to Viswanath Ghat for a bath in the morning. I turned towards Siva's Kutir. There he was, preparing for his bath. I hesitated to enter into the water, as he was downstream. I waited, and feasted my eyes on Siva.

Siva had his bath, offered his oblations. He poured water over his head, with the Kamandalu also. Then he worshipped the Ganges with flowers. And, lastly he offered Prasad (Naivedya) which the fortunate fish rushed to receive.

Siva has stuck to his own principles: he has adhered to the routine he set for himself when he was an aspirant Sadhu in Swarg Ashram. He does not neglect even a tiny detail. How foolish are we that we soon assume Siddhahood for our own ignorant selves and act as though there is no more Sadhana for us to do.

MAN vs. MONEY

John D'Cruz was hesitating to ask for a copy of the book The Diamond Jubilee Volume'. He had no money on hand. A very diligent and earnest Sadhaka, yet God had placed him in very poor circumstances.

Siva quickly perceived his own inner hunger for perusing this wonderful volume. 'Padmanabhanji, bring a copy of the D.J. Volume for D'Cruzji.'

J.D. was beside himself with joy: modestly he asked Siva: 'May I have this volume, Swamiji? It is such a costly and precious book!'

'Of course, it is for you, my dear D' Cruzji. The book is not worth anything to me in terms of money. You are more valuable than money, to me. And, if the book elevates you, I am much more satisfied than if you had paid me a hundred rupees in return for this book.'

No other institution, no other saint has gone to this extent to help Sadhakas on their march to the goal. Siva has given up his all in the service of Bhaktas.

SIVA AS SABHAPATHY

A meeting had been convened of the Muni-ki-reti residents to observe the Thanksgiving Day in commemoration of the victory over Hyderabad-His Excellency Sri C. Rajagopalachari had specially requested that special prayers be offered in all Mutts and Mandirs.

Sri Ram Ram Ram Sastriji formally requested Siva to occupy the chair. Another resident of the locality seconded it. Siva smiled and said: 'I third it. And, I occupy the chair with gratitude to you all.' And made everyone laugh at these formalities which convey no meaning to one who has realised That which is beyond Time and Space. Sabhapathy is, incidentally, one of the names of Lord Siva and should anyone then propose that Siva should be Sabhapathy?

TIME IS FLEETING

Swami Ram was requested to recite some Bhajans. First, his own throat had to be cleared: then the harmonium had to be tuned: pulling a knob, pushing another, adjusting here and there-it all took more than ten minutes for the Kirtanist to get attuned to this Jada-instrument. 'Rama, Rama,' remarked Siva, 'How much time do these people waste! All in merely tuning. What is there? Bhajan should be ready on the lips all the time: and the moment you are asked to sing, you should pour out His name.' During the gatherings which Siva addresses, even as he gets up to talk, he will be roaring OM.

DIVINE SOLICITUDE

An old lady was coming up to attend the Satsang. As the meeting was held on the roof of the building adjacent to the Ashram Annakshetra, we had improvised a step with a small table, to make it easier for people to ascend to the roof. The old lady was trying to look for a way to get upon the roof. Siva at once got up from his seat and with great solicitude guided the old lady to the place of the Satsang.

PERFECT ORGANISATION

Even while the Kirtan, Bhajan, etc., were in progress, Siva called Vishnudevji and asked: Is the Prasad ready?'

'Yes, Swamiji.'

Then collect the Arati, Panchapatra, and water for Naivedya, now itself.'

'Yes, Swamiji, I shall bring at once.'

'How many laddus will come for each?

'Perhaps, only one, Swamiji.' There was only half a bucketful of Prasad.

That is no good. It will not be enough. Go and bring Rs. 10 worth of sweets straightaway from the shop.'

We ran to the shop, on this sweet errand.

TRANSMISSION FASTER THAN RADIO

The meeting had passed a resolution conveying the nation's gratitude to the national leaders and military commanders over the efficient action in Hyderabad. Sri Lakshmanji had suggested that this resolution should be telegraphed to Delhi and Hyderabad, and also published in the papers. The Sabhapathy's turn arrived.

'Let us do Kirtan. Kirtan is a method of transmission of our thought-messages far quicker than any other means, even the radio. You have to go to the Post Office with the telegram tomorrow, and it will take a day for the telegram to reach Delhi. Here and now, you can send the message through Kirtan of the Lord's name. It will reach Lt. General Rajendra Singhji; it will reach the Nehru Government, and it will also reach the Supreme Government.'

I EAT THROUGH ALL

Siva was distributing Prasad. Laddus were rationed to two per head. Gradually, Siva lost control. And, soon the bucket was

almost emptied. When he found that everyone was really satisfied, he said:

'Look at the satisfaction that they have now. That is indeed the most important point. What is the use of giving one laddu or two laddus? When people come and sing the Lord's name and Prasad is distributed, people should go back fully satisfied. What a lop-sided economy it is to save expenditure in this respect!

Ten years ago when the Society was much poorer, everyone who came went fully satisfied. Even the Ashramites used to say: 'We, workers, do not get so many conveniences: but, Swamiji gives milk and fruits to a stray stranger who walks in and says he is sick and when this man leaves, Swamiji gives him ten rupees also.'

(Incidentally pointing out under what conditions and stress and austerities those undaunted workers carried on the mission during the thirtees.)

'Now only these people have started saying: the auditor objects. I have always said that the auditor has nothing to do with a Sannyasin's accounts. Where is audit for us? Audit and budget may be necessary from one point of view. But from the Sannyasin's point of view, nothing is necessary. I will go on spending. Let someone attach the buildings and the properties here. A Paramahamsa Sannyasin should be prepared to tie round his head his own loin cloth and vice versa and walk away.'

MY KUTIR IN SWARG ASHRAM

Padmanabhanji shows me an account. In August, we have given 2500 rupees worth of books alone free, against a sale of 1800-rupee worth of books. I do not care. All are benefited by the books. Let knowledge go round. If we cannot run this Ashram, we will go away: my Kutir is reserved in Swarg Ashram. I will go somewhere else and start once again.'

Perhaps, in one who has realised the Absolute, even renunciation reaches the Absolute point!

27th SEPTEMBER, 1948

JUDGE NOT

'Narayanaswamiji! You know there is one Brahmachari who has today come from South India? It appears he knows a lot about cement-work. He met a Sadhu on his way and got initiation from him into Brahmacharya. He appears to be a decent young man. Let him remain here. I have told him that he will have to work also; and he has readily agreed.'

Due to several reasons, it had been decided to restrict admission of Sadhakas into the Ashram. Therefore, everyone present when Siva said the above felt uneasy perhaps at the thought that the young Brahmachari may not be admitted by the Ashram Committee.

Siva at once read this feeling on every face.

You cannot say at the very first sight whether a Sadhaka will turn out to be good or not. Paramanandaji also came like this only; but later he proved to be a dynamic selfless worker. Several others have come and they have left also, because they had neither the zeal to work, nor the aspiration to tread the spiritual path. My policy has always been this-let the doors of the Ashram be open to one and all. The undesirable will either go away of their own accord, or be sent away by someone or other in the Ashram. It is all His business.'

OINTMENT FOR THE EYE: EYE-DROPS FOR THE WOUND

Aravamudan! Take this letter carefully to Premanandaji and get the correct address written on the envelope... Take this also and enclose Prasad in the cover.' A. picked up the letters.

'Be careful. In your hurry, do not act like the Calcutta lawyer.'

We all looked up to Siva inquisitively.

You see: this lawyer was in a hurry to go to the Court. He took the medicine chest: there were many bottles-and he put the eye-lotion on an injury on his leg and applied the ointment meant for wounds to the eye.'

AGGRESSION HERE TOO

One hardly expects even the word 'aggression' to be used in the vicinity of Ananda Kutir, the Abode of Bliss where the Shanta Satchidanandamurthy, the incarnation of Ahimsa, lives and moves about. Yet, perhaps what occasioned the usage was this:

Sri Haridasji (Mr. Henri van Zeyst) was returning from a long evening walk. He met Siva on the way. They both at once fell into a discussion on the benefits of walking, which led the talk on to exercise, Asanas, Pranayama, etc. Siva saw his chance there: at once grasped it.

'Haridasji, walking is, no doubt, good. It is refreshing: and especially when this is undertaken in jungle paths, alone; walking inspires the inner soul, and gives rise to sublime ideas.

'Yet, we should not minimise the importance of Asanas and Pranayama. They are equally important. Five minutes of Sarvangasana... and what an amount of nourishment the thyroid gland gets! Uddiyana, Nauli, Halasana and Paschimottanasana-the entire cabdominal region is whipped into action! Just try a few mild Asanas tomorrow: then you will at once know their benefits.

Pranayama also helps concentration. Bhastrika and Sukha-Purvaka are enough... Like this... (Siva on the road itself started demonstration of Bhastrika, no time to lose in catching the fish). It invigorates all nerves! Sukha-Purvaka steadies the mind.'

Haridasji thus got his initiation into Hatha Yoga.

28th SEPTEMBER, 1948

SUBTLE WAYS OF THE MIND

'OM Namo Narayanaya, Masterji Maharaj! You are not taking any notes in Vedanta. You know all these things?' Master S. again.

Sivanarayanji came to the rescue: 'Swamiji, he is already well read in Vedanta, Gita, etc.'

Then come, tell me what are the Shad Lingas?'

Sri Swami Krishnanandaji had just this morning explained them, in Vedanta class.

Silence

That is it. Even if you know the Vedantic truths, if something presents itself, even let it be the mere terminology, you should take notes. All ideas, thoughts, and lessons are useful.'

'I shall do so from tomorrow, Swamiji.'

'Why not today? A little vanity, I think. The feeling: I am a master, an old learned man; I cannot become a student now. That is the idea, isn't it?'

'No, no, Swamiji. Mainly, I am interested in Bhakti. And, I am not so fond of acquiring a mere verbal knowledge in Vedanta which I will not be able to use.'

'No, no, no. That is just a trick of the mind. If you direct your searchlight of Vichara, you will find out the thief. Otherwise, he will simply dupe you. You should not take the mind at its face-value. But, you do not care to dive deeper into its contents. You only graze on the top. If you go deeper and analyse minutely, you

will find that an external misleading cloak for preserving its vanity, is made to look like a valid reason for not taking notes.'

Much food for thought!

KEEP IT UNDER THE BED

As he moved a few yards away, Siva saw through the window of S.'s room a few pickle-bottles just near the window.

Sattvic achar or Rajasic chillie-walah' ? enquired Siva humorously.

'Swamiji, only two of these jars contain lemon-pickles: that, too, without any chillies. The other jars are empty.'

'No, no. It is all right. Chillies and pickles are necessary for the body.'

S. got a little upset: as he professed to be very particular about Sattvic and Rajasic foods, and was very fond of the three Slokas in the Gita where the Lord had delineated these. He ran inside the room and started showing Siva the contents of the jars, one by one.

This is only empty, Swamiji.'

'Yes, ready to receive a good inspiring pickle tomorrow!'

This made everyone laugh.

'But only keep all the jars away from the window,' Siva continued. 'People should not see for they will get a wrong impression. They will think: What is this Sadhu, eating pungent achars and other delicacies? So, keep the jars underneath the bed, so that they will be out of others' sight.'

There was irony in Siva's words. He said, in effect....give up evil in all its forms and in all circumstances. Do not hide anything:

for, the Antaryamin knows every- thing. Never pose to be a Yogi... How often do Sadhakas fall a victim to this snare.

THE SADHANA THAT HARDENS

A letter was on Siva's table: a great (?) European Yogi had written to Siva requesting him to invite him to India. This was needed to obtain a passport.

'What a big show of themselves do these so-called saints make! Flying from this country to that country: everywhere they go, parties, receptions and farewell parties, again. Is it not?'

Yes, Swamiji, we have seen many of these move about in regal comforts.'

A mischievous smile adorned Siva's lips: we were getting ready to receive something very interesting.

'Some of them should be received with a unique honour. Instead of flags and festoons adorning the reception entrance, people should hang old shoes and broomsticks.'

Srimathi Liliane Shamash visibly enjoyed the joke.

'What do you say?' Siva turned to her. 'How would you like such a reception? I am sure you would be greatly upset: you will feel shocked. Won't you?'

'I am not sure, Swamiji: I have not tried it.'

'We should not wait for the thing to happen actually. We should train ourselves. I have done so. I have beaten myself with shoes severely. This I used to do especially on Birthdays-just after returning to my Kutir after the meetings where people will praise me, glorify me, deify me, I will go into my Kutir and beat myself nicely with a pair of shoes: 'What are you? You wretched flesh-blood-excreta made body? Do you want garlands? Can you not

wear torn clothes? Do you think that you are great? Do you want to be prostrated to? Now, take these garlands.'

Blood raced through everyone's veins. Faces were red. Srimathi Liliane blushed. This great saint whom we all revere as God incarnate on earth, the Seer, God-realised sage, beating himself with shoes! Even we, the worms, insects that should have considered it a great blessing to roll over the dust of Siva's lotus feet, even that puny we would not do this.

Siva wanted to relieve us of discomfiture.

'Suka Deva was tested by Janaka like this. He was a great Jnani. When he went to Janaka for instruction, he was made to wait outside the palace uncared for, without food, without shelter and without any honour. Then he was attended upon by the ladies of the court and the Maharanis. In these ways, Janaka tested Suka Deva's tranquility of mind. Suka was above all these things. He had preserved his equanimity all through. Such should be a Sadhaka.

I have heard this said of St. Francis of Assisi also. He used to call his body Mr. Ass. What a tremendous Vairagya they all had!

'Even this occasional shoe-beating is not enough for me. I should give this body a dose of this hardening-medicine at least once a week.'

No one else dared to take any part in the discussion. I did not know what would happen next: for sometimes Siva gets seized by such ideas of Sannyasa, Vairagya, Sadhana, etc. Gradually, they pervade his entire being: then he would turn his fiery eyes towards us.... But, with this strange medicine of which Siva was so fond.

30th SEPTEMBER, 1948

ON CHARITY

'Very well. But, who loses? Not we. But only he loses the Lord's blessings.' Brushed aside Siva, a suggestion to approach afresh a devotee for the purpose of getting a book printed. Siva was also told that this devotee had expressed his displeasure at the Society not immediately utilising a donation which he had made for the purpose for which it was intended: and, as a result of this, he had stopped further contributions to the funds of the Society.

Charity should be unconditional,' Siva continued. 'Especially in the case of a spiritual institution where the organisers are trustworthy selfless servants of humanity, the donor should not bind the workers with all sorts of conditions. These people in charge of the institution know where funds are needed urgently. For instance, if money is urgently needed by us to maintain the Sadhakas, then we should use it for that purpose. It would then be foolish to starve the workers saying that there is no balance in the Ashram Maintenance Fund. If the Building Fund has money, and if this money is not urgently required there, any wise organiser will divert this money to the kitchen.

'For me, the printing of books is the greatest necessity.

All other works have a secondary priority. Dissemination of spiritual knowledge on the widest possible scale is my one thought. Construction, water scheme, and every other work can wait. The world looks to such Societies and Ashrams as ours for guidance. Even if we go and take food from the Kshetra, we should go on with publication of books and leaflets. The donor will be greatly benefited by such unconditional charity: he would have served, through his money, the whole world. Even if the money goes to feed some Sadhus and Sadhakas, the donor is greatly blessed.

Few people realise this. Others have the banker's mentality. This money for this: that money for that. This blocks their way to the

goal: this narrows their heart, clouds their intellect: this leads them to the vilification of Mahatmas, and their own downfall.'

For whose sake is he giving charity? Not for our sake. The Lord will provide us with sufficient funds to carry on His work. I have the power to bring about a shower of gold in the Ashram. I will not do it. The householders should have an opportunity of doing charity and being purified of their bad Karmas. Only through charity and the like will they purify their Heart and mind, expand and evolve. Everyone should realise this.'

WATCH THINK NOTE

Siva was very busy attending to the dispatch of free books. He suddenly stopped and looked up.

'From the time I got out of the morning class, I have been going on thinking of writing a few poems, but I do not find time. I am doing this work: but my mind is still working on the poems. Even when I was taking my milk, I was busy within sifting the points for the poems. Only when I finish the poems will my mind know rest.'

What a perfection of Ekagrata! It is hardly possible for us to think of one thing for such a long time, and protect it from being swallowed up by other worldly thoughts, especially eating, drinking, scandals and such others. Then I remembered that true devotion or Mumukshutwa is compared to a lady ever thinking of her paramour even while being engaged in household duties.

'Are you all keeping a note-book to record your thoughts?' Siva asked us. First of all, you should note down in this book all the new points that you learn in the class. Then there are parallel ideas that might strike you: or ideas arising out of those expressed by others in the class. These may be new, novel and unknown to

others. These should at once be noted down. Are you keeping such notebooks?'

Some of us nodded assent-others preferred to maintain a Vedantic balance and an unaffected steady posture.

HEAD EVER ABOVE THE CLOUDS

There is one special advantage in this. First you will hear some good points. Then you will go on thinking about them. These will give rise to other good points in you. When you start noting them down, they will grow. This will become a habit with you. You will always dwell on sublime thoughts. The mind will refuse to come down, even if invited to. This is Vedantic Sravana-Manana-Nididhyasana.

'Side by side, with this, you should keep another note-book for introspection. That is intended to eradicate the negative qualities in you. Killing out the evil, on the one hand and giving birth to divine thoughts and feelings on the other. Rapid progress is possible only then.'

When one good thought arises in the mind: say, the importance of truth, you must dwell on the glory of truth, the lives of great men who have adhered to truth, the nature of truth, the pitfalls and snares on the path of truth, the obstacles that have to be overcome, the subtle ways of the mind which deceives you and takes you along a side-track to falsehood-then dive into the mind and find out in what form falsehood lurks in your own mind, in gross or subtle form. Drive it out from there. Record the evil tendencies that you note in yourself.

NO TIME FOR EVIL

'If a man does this, he will soon find out the easy road to constant introspection. He will ever live an inner life. There will be no time for his mind to externalise. He will never think of others. He

will have no evil thoughts. Lust, anger, greed, etc. will die a natural death. He will not care if anyone spoke ill of him; if someone refused to give him milk or food, or if anyone criticised him. There will be no time for his mind to think of all these."

MOST IMPORTANT SADHANA

This led Siva to his favourite topic. 'Evil should not have time to dwell in your mind. What if someone refuses to give you milk, to give you food? What if someone scolded you? Always repeat: I am not this body; I am not this mind; I am the Eternal Immortal Satchidananda Atman.

'Bear insult and injury. If someone slaps you on your cheeks, you should not even mind it: you should not even be aware of it, so to say. This is very difficult. But, this is most important. When the other man is scolding you, your mind should be engaged in Vichara. After a while this man will realise: What is this, I have been scolding him several times; he does not get irritated, he does not retort: there must be something in him, which I should learn. Then he will fall at your feet and apologise. You have conquered.

INDEPENDENCE OR EGOISM?

'R. has gone away today, because someone ill-treated him. Who is the loser? Surely, R. himself.

These people have a peculiar idea of independence. True independence is an inner life, free from the sovereignty of Kama, Krodha, etc., under whose sway most men labour. What do you gain when you run away? Here his egoism, arrogance and vanity were one cubit long: after a few years of this independence, they will be several yards long. There will be none to point out his mistakes: no one to enable him to practise patience, endurance and adaptability. You should all daily read my articles 'Most Important Sadhana' and 'Adaptability'. How can Deivi Sampatti

be cultivated without adaptability, without your learning your own defects and trying to eradicate them?

'You should identify yourselves with the Society and the mission. You should work heart and soul for the Cause. Then only will your heart be quickly purified. This is also work: and the work that you did in your previous office was also work. But there is a vast difference between the two. There it was for remuneration: there you were watching the clock. Here the only remuneration is Moksha, Jnana. The highest reward presupposes the greatest exertion, too. All the time you should introspect and eradicate your egoism.

'Some people foolishly think: 'I have renounced much wealth. I have resigned a good job. I had plenty of landed property. These people are treating me like a servant.' When you have renounced the world, when you have embraced the Nivritti Marga, where is property, where is job, where is position? The only and the greatest property and position you have is renunciation. Do not boast. This will only fatten your egoism. Be humble. You must astound everyone by your humility.

'For a few years, many aspirants are humble and obedient. My nature is to train every aspirant to develop all his faculties and become a dynamic worker. I teach them every kind of work and try to mould them into perfect leaders. They take undue advantage of this. When they have learnt a little bit of Gita, Upanishads, etc., when they can deliver some lectures, when they know how to run an Ashram, they run away and wish to start independent Ashrams.

'What is the big idea? They want to be garlanded. They want to be respected. They do not want anyone to point out their errors. They want to be treated as Mahants. But, think for a while. Here is an institution which has been created out of the hard labour of many

over a long period. Work for this: you will be respected everywhere, in all the Branches. There is a ready field for work. You can do tremendous service. If you start off independently, you will have to do all the organising work yourself and begin from the beginning.

'Even till the very last, one should be vigilant against this egoism. It raises its head in various forms. Man is often deceived and side-tracked. Every aspirant should be vigilant. Every aspirant should welcome insults and injuries. Everyone should learn to adapt himself, humiliate himself, learn to introspect constantly and thus evolve rapidly.'

YOGI JOHN D'CRUZ

Take care of the Society; the Society will take care of you. Do you understand what this means?' asked Siva when John D'Cruz came in for his darshan.

Yes, Swamiji. I do understand. Because the work is divine, when I dedicate myself to the work, God will take care of me.

'Exactly. I will direct you and guide you. I will make you into a pucca Yogi. Do just as I tell you.'

'Yes, Swamiji. I am always ready to do so.' John's faith in Siva is simply amazing.

JOHN SWEPT OFF HIS FEET

Blessed John D'Cruz!

'I will now tell you the secret. As soon as you go to Saharanpur, get into touch with a few students and a few teachers. Teach the students Asanas. Do you know the technique of Asanas?'

'Yes, Swamiji, I know the important ones.

That is enough. Start with these. Teach the students and the teachers also. Distribute the leaflets and pamphlets widely. Spread the knowledge of Yoga everywhere. Hold morning classes and evening Kirtan classes. Read a few passages from the books. Thus you will be able to create an interest in people for the books themselves. Book their orders for books and send here. Enroll members for the Society and the Magazine. That way you will be taking care of the Society also. And, surely the Society will take care of you.

Become a Yoga teacher in your own district first. Become the sovereign of Saharanpur. The entire district should be under your control. When you have established yourself here, then you should move out in the neighbourhood, and establish Divine Life centres there also. You should take the divine life message from door to door. That is the secret. Later on, people will come to your feet and learn.

Do not cringe before the big people. Do your work silently among the common men: send some Magazines, pamphlets and books to the big people of the locality. They will come to your house! The secret is: you should be humble and dignified.

'Capture the hearts of all through service and love. Invite all to your meetings-Mohammadans and Christians, everyone should have free access to your centre. You should have equal vision.

'Whenever you have doubts to be cleared or whenever you feel like resorting to seclusion and practising meditation for replenishing yourself with spiritual energy, come here. Stay here for a few days. Then go back to work with redoubled vigour. You will become the King of several districts.

'Jai ho ji! May God bless you!'

The secret of organisation-in simple words!

CHECK THAT IMPULSE

Swami X had got a little annoyed at an aspirant's attitude. This lady had been so much upset over a relative's death that she had expressed great grief in her letter. The cool Vedantin in the young Swami revolted against this. And, in a reply, he had chided her mildly and pointed out that instead of wasting her thoughts on the dead relative, she could well utilise it in God-thought.

Siva would not agree even to this. He said: 'No, no. There should not be one word which will hurt a devotee's feelings. There should not be one negative suggestion. Always dwell on positive thoughts and ideas. Encourage everyone. If you are vigilant, you will always find some point in every one with the help of which you can persuade the aspirant to ignore the weak points. Every word must be sweet, even if the aspirant is completely wrong in his stand.

'When you write a letter under a sudden impulse, leave it there: when the impulse had died out, read the letter again. You will surely like to alter it.'

NO REGRETS

'Similarly in the case of conversation also. Never give vent to the first impulse. When you are agitated, leave the place. Do not talk. Don't be foolish and say something which you will later regret. If you give vent to the first impulse, then later on you will go on your knees and apologise. Make it a habit not to use offending words. Never give offence to anyone. You will never regret. You will be loved by all.'

Sound advice to all!

FRENCH LEAVE?

'OM Namo Narayanaya! When did you come? Are you all right?'

The French Sadhu whom Siva greeted in this manner, replied: 'I am very sorry, Swamiji, that I left without telling you. I apologise for this misconduct. I went to Badrinath and am just returning.'

'Oh, it is all right. This is called French leave here. As you are yourself a Frenchman, you are quite right to take this leave!'

Not a word of reproach but humour in everything. The Frenchman was greatly non-plussed on seeing that not only was his shortcoming ignored, but Siva treated it so light-heartedly.

SECRET OF BUSINESS EXPANSION

'Maharaj, if you had come to the Mandir, attended the Pradosha Puja and sung the Lord's name, you would have greatly enjoyed it yourself, got the Pradosha Prasad and received the Lord's blessings also. You are always engrossed in Jalebi and tea-making. For one hour, if you forego this, your business also will greatly increase. One hour’s Satsang means incalculable benefit to you. Your business also will expand enormously due to the Lord’s grace. A short sermon to the shop-keeper who met Siva on his way back to his Kutir from the temple. Siva has a way of tempting all to share his devotion to him.

OCTOBER, 1948

2nd OCTOBER, 1948

INBORN LAZINESS

On our way back from the morning class, Siva noticed that one young boy had spat just outside his room underneath the Yajnashala.

'Who has cleaned his teeth here?' queried Siva, with a smile, as usual. If one is capable of doing this in this season, he will probably pass urine within the room in winter when the cold wind blows.'

The boy came out of the room and bowed to Siva.

'Laziness is the inborn nature of every man. This boy is not to blame. It is human nature. But, my dear young man, we are here only to conquer our nature. It must be your second-nature to keep everything neat and clean and to develop good habits, hygienic habits. This is the age for it, too.'

CONSIDERATION FOR THE AGED

Someone then pointed out to Siva that another aged Sadhaka was also irregular in this respect.

'But, that is a different case. He is aged. He has done a lot of work for the Society, too. Even now, he is rendering yeoman service to the cause. Such people must be excused.'

With his usual winsome smile, Siva added: 'Perhaps I should also be exempted and placed in the same category. For instance, my bowels are very often loose; yet, I have good control. That is because this has become my habit, my second nature.'

ALL DAYS ARE ALIKE FOR THE TIMELESS SAGE

As we moved a little farther, Siva suddenly remembered about Appayya Jayanthi which is celebrated every year at Ananda Kutir.

'Oh Venkateswarji, when is Appayya Jayanthi this year?'

'Swamiji, it is already over-on the 19th September.' Is that so? But, you did not tell us at all. Everyone forgot all about it. All right: it does not matter. We shall celebrate it on the next full-moon day. Narayanaswamiji, please note it in your diary. Only then will we remember it without fail. We shall read some of Appayya's works, his commentary on the Sutras, and there can also be discourses on his life, etc.'

This is an indirect mockery of time, by one who has transcended Time, Space and Causation. Celebrations of Jayanthis, etc., are for those who still need a rap in the knuckles to rouse them to the true purpose of life, which the great ones have exemplified in their own life. All days are the same: each day is as important as the other. If only we can make every morning a Jayanthi to remind ourselves of our goal, the progress will be greatly accelerated.

(I might here link this up with an evening incident. After the evening Satsang had concluded, Siva was distributing Prasad. To Swami Satchidanandaji, he offered a second helping of the Prasad: 'It is your birthday: take more.' As he turned to another Sadhaka: 'Is it your birthday also?' 'No, Swamiji,' came the honest reply. Siva turned to a third: Today is indeed your birthday: what is there, today is everyone's birthday: every day is your birthday.')

DOCTOR'S DILEMMA

Let us follow Siva further down, I resume the morning narrative. Pannalalji's family is going to the Viswanath Ghat for the bath. 'OM Namo Narayanaya. Did the doctor come and see the child last night?' One of the children in the family was sick.

'No, Swamiji. But the child is improving by your grace alone.'

'Oh Venugopalaswamiji, you did not go to Vana- prastha Hermitage last night?'

'No, Swamiji: I will go now, Swamiji.'

'Of course, you can go now. But I had asked you to attend to that baby last night itself. And you had agreed, too. You have neglected your duty. It is either laziness or neglect. It is through these that you miss such golden opportunities of rendering service.

'If I had known that you would not go, then I would myself have gone and attended to the child. This service is greater than all meditation and study. By serving the sick, you directly put yourself in tune with the Infinite. You develop the heart which is the only way to realise the Supreme.'

I thought that I need not go at night, Swamiji. So, I neglected it.'

'When I say: Go immediately, you should not mind whether it is midnight or midday and attend to the patient. Do not think I am finding fault with you: it is all for your good only. By such frequent self-analysis, you should try to improve and make yourself perfect. Om Namo Narayanaya, Jai ho ji.'

NO, NOT EVEN YOUR WIFE

The essential qualification for a Sadhu is that he should adapt himself to all conditions and circumstances, causing no inconvenience to others. His is the duty to serve: not to worry others. Very few Sadhus know what they are and what they should be.

This morning an old Sadhu from Swarg Ashram came here. He was there when I was there, too. He is aged 80 now. Today, they did not prepare roti here. There was only rice and Sambhar. But,

the Sadhu would not take. He wanted only roti. It seems rice will produce wind. If you allow him, he will lecture to you for half an hour on the evil effects of rice-eating. But he will refuse to be reminded that a very large population in India and the world lives on rice alone.

This is all that he has understood of Sadhana during all these thirty years of Sadhu life. Rice should not be taken: roti alone is good for health and meditation. All their life, these people will waste on this one thought of the right food and the wrong food. What is there if one day you do not get your food to your own liking? Even your own wife will not tolerate you for a day if you are so particular about what food you should have.

It is the special duty of a Sadhu not to cause any inconvenience to householders. We are not to be a burden on householders, but to be of some service to them. When will the Sadhu understand this?'

HOME AFFAIRS

'And, the worst part of it all is this Sadhu who is adamant in his longing for the roti will not be given anything except rice here! I had to go about here and there asking this man and that cook to prepare a few parottas for the Sadhu.

The Sadhu has his own specifications for the parotta, too: It must be extra-thick: this is a convenient method of escaping criticism that he is a glutton. Instead of taking twenty parottas of the usual size, he will now take only six of the abnormal size.

'If I merely tell someone here, nothing will be done. Some cook or some worker will just look up to me with his mind somewhere else, and then forget all about it when he sees my back! And, a few have got the mentality that their will should be done. So, my

worry is all the more. I have to sit by the side of the cook and see that the Sadhu is given the parottas.

NOT IN A THOUSAND LIVES

'Some Sadhaks here also have that impression that they are living in an Ashram and that one consideration ought to be sufficient to open out the gates of Kaivalya to them. I assure you: even if they live many hundreds of their lives near the greatest saint in the world, they will not improve even a bit. They must themselves exert. Each one must think for himself, act for himself. There have been some Sadhaks here whom I myself trust and put in charge of the affairs of the Ashram: then I myself used to dread to approach them. If, for instance, I go to them and ask them to prepare a little more of what they give me for my food in order that I may give the extra quantity to some one else, I would be refused. What I do on those occasions is to reduce my own consumption and distribute this to the others.

'If a Sadhaka gets real Samadhi in a hundred births, that is a very great achievement. God is Perfect: and unless and until all the evil qualities are eradicated and divine qualities acquired to the degree of Perfection, there will be no Samadhi.'

A glimpse of the heart of Sivananda. From the above, we have an idea of the nature of an ideal Sadhu, how Siva lovingly serves even one who does not rise to this ideal, and the supreme embodiment of patience and consideration that Siva is in the matter of training his own disciples who are given the fullest freedom to evolve in their own way; even if it meant trying Siva's patience severely.

Siva now turned to Sri Rajagopalan who had during the University class in the morning asked for methods of shutting out extraneous thoughts during meditation.

'Meditation is only the seventh Anga of Yoga. Without first attending to the preliminaries, you want to get established in the seventh limb! Is this possible? First, get established in Yama and Niyama. This alone is sufficient work for several lives.

'Study Gita. Find out if you have developed one hundredth part of one virtue which the Lord has prescribed for all Sadhakas. If you have done even this, you have deserved the human birth. This eradication of evil qualities and cultivation of good ones is such a difficult task that there is no use treating it lightly.

'Anyone can write articles. Anyone can solve others' difficulties, so long as the solution is not applied to one's own self. You can turn out tremendous work. But, these are all faculties. Even singing Kirtan melodiously and inspiringly is the development of a faculty that God has given you. Do not mistake this for the acquisition of Sadhu-qualities. They are entirely different. It is extremely difficult to develop one quality which is necessary in a Sadhu.

'Yet, I am not discouraging you all. Go on introspecting and eradicating the evil qualities one by one. You will soon find yourself in the region of Perfection.

First get rid of gross impurities. Anger: how many are an easy victim to the grossest form of anger. This fighting nature is inborn in everyone. A Sadhu should completely eradicate this evil. This evil quality has no place in him. Someone here abused him and R. has gone away. Even if he was an undesirable person, we should not abuse him. That is why the greatest sages prescribed Maitri, Karuna, Muditha and Upeksha for a Sadhu or a Sadhaka. Friendship towards equals, sympathy towards inferiors, admiration and respect towards superiors and indifference towards undesirable persons. When you take Sannyasa, you take the vow: Abhayam Sarva Bhutebhyah. Even an ant should not be

afraid of you. You give Abhaya (the guarantee of fearlessness) to all. Even the worst of men should not be afraid of you.'

'Without these qualities, there is only Rupantara- bheda in a Sadhu. The garb has been changed but the nature-has remained the same. Try to improve yourselves little by little. Be on the alert. So long as you are on the right path, there is no fear: you are sure to reach the goal.'

A rare occasion on which Siva the Jagad Guru raises the Finger of Admonition! The Finger belongs to the Hand of Siva, the Loving Mother and it is raised only when that love expresses itself as stern guidance.

3rd OCTOBER, 1948

REGISTRAR AT THE ASHRAM

Today has been a very important day in the annals of the history of the society. The Sub-Registrar of Dehra Dun came to the Ashram for reverently getting the revised Trust Deed of the Divine Life Trust Society registered and signed by Siva. A retired Judge (Sri Gauri Prasadji of Swarg Ashram) was also with us. At the conclusion of the signing ceremony, Gauri Prasadji suggested that if the Registrar found any difficulty in declaring that 'Swami Sivananda is personally known' to him, he (the Judge) would help him. Instantly came the Registrar's reply: I should consider myself unfit to call myself a human being if I could not declare that I personally know Swamiji. Why? The whole world knows him! Can anyone ever afford to deny knowledge of Swamiji?'

The moment the Sub-Registrar came in, he found himself in a valley on every side: Siva's fragrant love enchanting him and enveloping him. He found, not the dismayed respect that greets him in other places, but a brotherly, nay Atmic, love which knows no bounds.

AGE-OLD RELATIONSHIP

As we were going in a car to Rishikesh for the completion of the actual ceremony, the Sub-Registrar revealed himself.

'Even in my College days, I felt myself drawn to Swamiji's books. They were my constant companions. I went through my LL.B. course: and even after I got into the U.P. Service, these books have served to guide me, my daily activities, and to cheer me up, in short, to breathe new life into me.

I have had a great yearning all the time to come to Rishikesh and have Swamiji's Darshan. Today has been that glorious day: it is a red-letter day in my life. I consider myself most fortunate to have had Swamiji's Darshan today. Not the Ganga Snan, nor a visit to the holy place as such, nor even the comfortable and enjoyable stay in the Ashram: but, this alone do I consider a great blessing - Swamiji's holy Darshan and his blessings.

'Looking from that angle, I consider even my present appointment a great gift from God: for it was that that enabled me to make the Saint's personal acquaintance.'

At the Viswanath Bagh, too, the Sub-Registrar could not but feel that he had already been assimilated into divine life: he was one of us, one with Siva. The parting had all the pathos in it: and the 'stranger' Sub-Registrar left us, really and sincerely a disciple of Siva. As the Judge Saheb humorously remarked: 'You came to register a document of the Society: but your name has already been entered in the registers of the Divine Life Society and Swamiji has already registered you as a divine lifer.' This is true to the very letter. And, when he left, he had been blessed by Siva with the gift of some of the books, food enough for his soul.

4th OCTOBER, 1948

TYPEWRITING SCHOOL?

'What poor opinion of Rishikesh Sadhus do these people have!' remarked Siva after a few modern men and women had peeped into the office, made their appearance felt, and left the place.

They threw a glance at the entire office as soon as they entered: they just could not resist Siva's magnetic personality which compelled them to bow their heads to him: and then they busied themselves watching with keen interest the clatter of typewriters. A gentle lady moved nearer one of the typewriters, gazed intently at the Sadhu adorning the machine's front-What a curious sight!' she must have thought.

She then moved towards Siva and asked: 'Do you teach these people typewriting here?'

Siva, obviously in the fullest sympathy with the proud visitor who had perhaps no idea that typewriters could be found in Sadhus' hermitages, said: 'No, no. They are all expert typists. They have all been holding high positions in the Government and commercial offices, renounced their jobs and joined this Ashram. They are all pastmasters in the art.'

Their curiosity satisfied, they turned to the door.

'Maharaj! please wait. I will give you something to read.'

The visitors turned back in surprise: 'You will give me books also?' They looked at one another. The gentleman, a pure aristocrat unadulterated by an iota of divine qualities, commanded a Sadhaka: Then, bring the books quickly: we want to go.' Vishnudevji handed him a few leaflets and books. With another, (this time, a more sincere) bow to Siva, the party left.

Siva then turned to us and said: They think that Sadhus would be illiterate, good-for-nothing people living on neem-leaves. What a poor conception of this glorious institution they have!'

THE BULL-INMATE PASSES AWAY

'Swamiji, you have built that Kutir on the very bank of the Ganges. What a nice shed! Is it for meditation purposes? But, in rainy season, it will be washed away by the Ganges!' wondered a visitor seated in the Viswanath Ghat, gazing as he was towards Siva's Kutir beyond which, on the shores of the Ganges stood a small 'Kutir', a humble thatched shed.

'No, no. It is not a Kutir in the sense that you take it to be. It is indeed a Kutir, yes, and it, at present, houses an invalid. I shall explain it to you.'

Siva and the visitor went to the 'Kutir'. What was there inside? An old, emaciated bull in dying condition.

'My God,' exclaimed the visitor. He thought of finding a meditating Sadhaka there.

Yes, you have said it. It is your own God inside the Kutir. It is not meant to be a Kutir for a Sadhaka to meditate in: but a Kutir to house an embodiment of God. Don't you see our God in this bull, too?'

Two Ashramites were there tending to the bull. Like a regular Ashramite, this bull was treated. Food, drink, shelter, all comforts, and all attention. And Siva was particular in his daily visits. It was fortunate enough to have dropped its body just at the foot of his Kutir. The astonished visitor was beside himself when he noticed all this. This for a poor beast, that too an emaciated one, which we would long ago have been driven out of the house as useless (after having made the best use of its youth).' Not so with Siva: the bull which had served the divine cause was just as useful and as much an object of his affection and attention as a human being who shares the good fortune.

The bull breathed its last this evening: and under Siva's directions, was consigned to mother Ganges (as a Sannyasin is) with Maha Mantra Kirtan.

KESARI YOGA

'Aiye Maharaj,' greeted Siva, in his characteristic style, the visitor who stepped inside the office. The newcomer prostrated before Siva and took his seat on the bench.

Siva then gave him a copy of the latest issue of The Divine Life' magazine and a collection of messages.

You are coming here after a long time.'

'Yes, Swamiji, after eight years.'

'Have you seen the temple, Bhajan Hall, and Kaivalya Guha?' asked Siva.

'Yes, Swamiji, I am just coming from the hillock after having the Darsan of the various buildings, temples, Akhanda Kirtan Hall and the Mahatmas living there. I am simply amazed at the wonderful work you have turned out in such a short time. No one has even during his entire life-time done such excellent work as you have done. Sitting on the bank of the Ganga, in the Himalayas, in this small Kutir, you have simply thrilled the whole world. Swamiji Maharaj, you have got Kesari Yoga which is one of the best Yogas according to astrology.'

'What is Kesari Yoga?'

'Kesari Yoge Jato Dhanavan Swakulaadhipo: Grama Pura Nagara Kartha Sahasramaseshu Jeevitam--One who is born in Kesari Yoga becomes rich, the leader of his race, becomes the creator of villages, towns, cities etc., and lives for a thousand months. This is the fruit of Kesari Yoga. When I think of the development in this Sivananda Nagar, I am convinced that the effect of Kesari

Yoga is fully demonstrated in your case. Your reputation and glory is something marvellous. Wherever we go, we hear of your wonderful work. Everywhere, your books are read."

7th OCTOBER, 1948

VIGILANT VIGILANT VIGILANT EVER

I told you the other day itself that these account books will be spoilt by rain. They thought that sun had come: so, there would be no rains.'

It is the wind that spoils it, Swamiji. If the wind is not there, water does not come in. It is the wind that misdirects the rain.'

'All right,' said Siva, smiling, 'send a petition to Vayu not to blow when it is raining, and thus spoil our papers. Very well, you can now go on keeping the account books and papers in a careless manner.'

By now, the Ashramite had realised the point. 'No, Swamiji, I did not mean that. I shall have the books and papers removed from near the veranda.'

You see: you should always be careful. Some people think there will be no snakes and scorpions in summer. Instead, if you are always careful, and take a lantern, you will be safe. As soon as the work is over, the hands should automatically bolt the doors and windows and move the account books and papers to safe places.'

Oh rain! We are grateful to you for you have enabled this torrential wisdom to be poured out to us. Siva's message of eternal vigilance! How many aspirants often fall a victim to the temptation of considering themselves beyond the reach of Maya's long arms and in a complacent mood voluntarily walk into her clutches. Even in sunny days (of spiritual glory), Siva would like us to securely bolt the door with Viveka and Vairagya, so that the rain of passions wafted hither and thither by the wind of

circumstances might not spoil the record of our divine accounts built up slowly and steadily through many years of hard labour. Even in sunny days, Siva would like us to go about with the lantern of wisdom and Mumukshutwa in order not to be stung by the scorpion of lust or bitten by the serpent of egoism.

FALSE ECONOMY

I am always careful regarding the very minutest details,' continued Siva. 'Several people here used to ask me to send large consignments of books, through people who go to the same city from here. Sometimes, N. with his keen interest in economy would suggest getting our books from Calcutta or other places by goods train. What would happen to them? When they reach here, half of them would be soaked in oil, the other half would smell of jaggery.

The other day Pannalal's friend asked me if I had some books, etc., for him to carry to Pannalalji. I actually had a big parcel of books: but I would not send it through him. He might himself forget it at the railway station, or in the carriage. He might forget to deliver it immediately when he reaches Amritsar. And then, he might send the parcel through someone, and thus the books might go astray and never reach the person at all. All this to save a few rupees! I do not allow it at all. Even at the cost of a few extra rupees, I send the books direct to the persons intended and thus ensure proper delivery.'

8th OCTOBER, 1948

THE EASY CLOAK

'OM Namo Narayanaya, Master Saheb. You are not attending the class nowadays? You do not feel it interesting, I think. And, these boards here-they are yet to be painted. I see them in the same condition for the past so many days.'

'Swamiji, I like to be in a meditative mood always, engrossed in Brahma-Chintan. This study and the lectures and hearing of so many different subjects confuses me. I want to be established in Brahman alone. This work is sometimes a hindrance, too. They all distract my mind.' S.D. had just returned from a Brahma Chintan class which he had attended, not in the Ashram.

Siva walked a few steps away: then, when he was just in front of S.D.'s room, said: "Then why not throw away all these watches and clocks? They are no hindrances to your Brahma-Chintan?' S.D. had no answer for this.

Through this simple remark, Siva had pointed out to all of us, how easily we dupe ourselves and mistake the Preyas for the Sreyas. We often wilfully distort the facts about true Sadhana: look at things from a wrong angle and deceive ourselves and others.

TAMARIND-CURE

An aged Madrassi Sadhu-guest was sick. He had been provided with all comforts, a room, medicines and 'diet' etc. It was about 11 a.m. and a light flavour from the kitchen which was near the room attracted him out of his Kutir. Venugopalji was requesting him to take rest in the room and not to stir out too much.

Siva was in the office: so was Dr. Sundari who is on a visit to the Ashram. They both heard what was going on outside.

V. came into the office to take Siva's instructions regarding the Sadhu's diet.

'Give him whatever he asks for.'

V. was surprised. This, to a patient who has been down with fever for the past four days?

'Swamiji, he is feeling restless just at present, because he wants to eat all sorts of things.'

Dr. Sundari took her eyes off the book she had in hand and fixed them on Siva curiously awaiting Siva's reactions.

'If you give him good Sambhar, he will be all right.'

People around laughed.

I am not joking,' continued Siva: he is a Madrassi Sadhu. He has long been deprived of his favourite tamarind. When the mind gets its satisfaction, the fever will also subside.'

Dr. Sundari agreed with the wisdom of Siva.

CENT PER CENT PURE IS

CENT PER CENT FALSEHOOD

Siva was examining with Dr. Sundari, some chemicals in the dispensary. 'Is this good stuff?" asked Siva of Venugopalji, pointing to a bottle.

'Yes, Swamiji, it is written on the bottle itself 'Cent Per Cent Pure'.

'H'm? Cent per cent pure is cent per cent falsehood.'

What a mystic utterance! Nothing is pure to perfection, to the absolute degree. Only God or Brahman is cent per cent pure, rather purity itself. All else is tainted by Maya or ignorance. Therefore, to say that an object is cent per cent pure is to utter a cent per cent falsehood.

TRANSCENDENTAL EDUCATIONIST

None to approach Siva in this respect.

Sri T.K. Srinivasan, M.A., of Pudukotaah, had written to Siva that he had been appointed Professor in the Rajah's College there and

had asked for his blessings. Siva wrote out the letter in his own hand:

'Sri Professor Srinivasan, M.A.,

OM Namo Narayanaya.

Glorious Immortal Atman.

Adorations and salutations.

Tat Twam Asi.

Thy kind letter and flowers.

Immensely delighted to know you have become a Professor now. It is all Lord's Grace.

In your class, in the end, always talk kindly to the students on the importance of spiritual life, ethical life, ethical discipline, study of Gita, or religious books, service of poor and country and the sick with Atma Bhava or Narayana Bhava. Give a slight, spiritual colouring in your lectures, a little link with Lord, and Adhyatmic matters.

Professors are certainly responsible for the spiritual moulding of students. Make them Adhyatmic soldiers to fight bravely in the battle of life. You can do that. You are spiritually inclined. You are already treading the path of Truth. You are full of spiritual Samskaras.

May Lord bless you with health, long life, peace, prosperity and Kaivalya! May you shine as a dynamic Yogi! May you be filled with knowledge and power to raise the students ethically and spiritually!

With regards, Prem and OM,

SIVANANDA

The letter more than amply explains itself.

MY 'SADGURU'

One particularly remarkable feature in the above letter is the 'salutations' portion. Even if the letter proper contains just three lines of 'what happened to that' business, it is invariably prefixed with all these: OM Namo Narayanaya, Glorious Immortal Atman, Adorations and Salutations, Tat Twam Asi, Harih OM, etc.

What a curious combination, one wonders. First, a Saguna Mantra: then a sudden leap into the Absolute, again a merciless slaughter of the little ego which is compelled to lie prostrate on the ground, then the lion roars the Mahavakya. First, Siva engenders in himself the Narayana Bhava towards the addressee. Then awakens the addressee to his own real Swaroopa, incidentally meditating himself on the nature of the Atman. Then, Siva's humility overpowers him: incidentally teaching the addressee also to be humble. Then.... an electric current passes through every nerve-fibre of the addressee-Tat Twam Asi. And, it provides a daily repetition for Siva himself. As many letters are written this way, so much of Japa done, of these great Saguna and Nirguna Mantras: so often has the writer humbled himself and prostrated to the living and walking Narayanas.

SIVA DINES WITH HIS DISCIPLES

The heading would have made you exclaim, especially if you have had the knowledge of orthodox Sannyasin Mutts, 'Unthinkable'.

The 8th of each month had been declared to be a gala-day at Ananda Kutir, the monthly birthdate of Gurudev. Swami Sankaranandaji and Swami Visweswaranandaji conspired to make history. They requested Siva to take his food in the Dining Hall today. To every one's surprise, Siva readily agreed.

NOR WILL I

The bell had gone. Leaves were spread. The dining hall was already full. A place had been reserved for Siva. The office block remained vacant.

Along with Siva was an Engineer from Dehra Dun who had just come. The Engineer's party consisted of a few more boys and girls, too. The Swami posted at the gate of the dining hall politely requested the Engineer to wait for the second batch: There is no place in this.'

'Nor will there be place for me in this. I shall also take food in the second batch with Engineer Saheb.'

The Swami raised himself on his toes to see where this remark came from.

Siva was standing behind the Engineer group. If the Engineer is not given a place to sit, Siva, too, would not sit. Then the Engineer's group was asked to occupy the 'Secretariat Block'.

GURU KIRTAN

After the meals were over, Siva sang beautifully the Guru Stothra 'Brahmanandam Paramasukhadam'. Then others began, too-in the manner adopted at Feasts.

A subtle truth is hidden in this. We were celebrating this as our Guru Jayanthi: and we were thinking that we were paying our homage to our Gurudev. And, in the midst of all this, Siva himself started singing the Guru Stothra.

This visible, name and form, Sivananda sings the glory of that nameless and formless Truth, 'Sivananda' the Guru of all. So, Siva feels justified even from the layman's point of view to sit with Sivananda's disciples on Sivananda's birthday.

Incidentally, I might mention that I have noticed Siva faithfully following the Kirtan Dhwani: 'Guru Maharaj Guru Jai Jai,

Sivananda Sat Guru Jai Jai.' The Sa-Upadhika Sivananda singing the name of the Nirupadhika Sivananda.

It is difficult for us even to understand this: words too fail to describe Siva's glory. So, let us meditate on Him.

JNANA YAJNA FUND

As soon as the Engineer entered the office, Siva greeted him: 'Avoji, Engineer Saheb, Om Namo Narayanaya.'

The stalwart Engineer bowed to Siva: then shouted at his children: 'You better go up, see the Mandir and then come back."

When they had been despatched, he placed a hundred-rupee note at Siva's feet: This is for your grand Jnana Yajna, Swamiji.'

At once Siva called out to Padmanabhanji in Tamil: 'Bring a lot of books for him.'

After handing over a lot of books to him, Siva said: Take your food here itself. Oh Vishnuji, arrange for their food immediately.'

'Swamiji,' pleaded the Engineer, 'do not bother about this food. I would like to receive from you some other kind of food-food for my soul. I am still a Grihastha. And, I would like to have from you Upadesha as to how I can lead a perfect Grihasthi life.'

'Do Japa. Read Gita. Have some Vratas. Observe moderation in everything. Do Kirtan with all your children.'

I am already doing Japa and am reading Ramayana, As you have ordered me to do so, I will read Gita also."

Visibly pleased, Siva exclaimed: 'Oh! You have already got the key to Moksha. You have only to open it. God's grace is also with you in full measure."

Afterwards, the Engineer purchased a number of gramophone records, books, photographs, etc. Handing a picture of Siva to

each of his little children, the Engineer said: 'Swamiji, these are all your future disciples.' What devotion! And, he is from the aristocracy.

PERFECT MEMORY

'Swamiji, You might not recognise me', started a Sadhu as he met Siva near the dispensary.

'Oho, how can I forget you? I met you twelve years ago in Naimissaranya: is it not?'

How can he deny? Tongue-tied with amazement, he simply kept quiet. Siva turned to me: That was long ago and I had gone to Naimissaranya on a lecture-tour. And, when I was to lecture at Lakhimpore, this Swami was also there.'

The Sadhu had to brush up his memory.

'He was eager to lecture,' continued Siva: 'and, I took great interest in him and made him deliver a short lecture.' Turning to the Sadhu: You remember that?'

Still dazed, he replied: Yes, Swamiji. What a wonderful memory you have got!'

Both came in. Then, Siva asked Vishnudevji to give the Sadhu a copy of the Magazine, leaflets, etc. And, he asked him to take the Sadhu and show him round. The guileless Sadhu expressed wonderment at the meteoric growth of the Ashram: he had seen it long ago when it had hardly a couple of rooms.

In the meantime, a few smart gentlemen had walked in. with an air of that bureaucratic superiority, one of them said: ‘Swamiji, we came to have your Darshan here. I am an information officer. I had my friends at Hardwar.

Oh, yes, you have previously come here: I remember.’

Yes, Swamiji, that was long ago when I was working in a newspaper office in Lahore.'

'Oh yes: you saw me in Lahore also.' Then he mentioned a few names one which was the information officer's!

11th OCTOBER, 1948

THE CHILD KNOWS

In the Bhajan Hall, the kanyakas (young girls) were being worshipped in the traditional fashion. It was a sight to see Siva himself doing the 'Arati' to these children, placing reverently flowers on their heads and singing hymns in praise of the Mother whose embodiments they are.

A small baby was also in the group. An Ashramite tried to cajole this baby to eat a pinch of 'Halva' from his hands. The child stoutly refused the offer, and actually brushed the proferred hand aside. Only from her own sister, she would accept it.

A little while later, when all of us had forgotten about this incident, Siva was enquiring of each child what she wanted. And, the baby's turn came. Siva knelt before the baby and took a pinch of Halva, smiled at it and took his hand near its mouth, which automatically opened for the Prasad.

MY NIRVIKALPA SAMADHI

In the afternoon, we had performed the Ayudha Puja by assembling the typewriters, cameras, movie equipment and projectors, etc., near the Diamond Jubilee Hall. Siva

also joined us in the worship. After the function was over, Siva stood near the entrance visibly admiring the grand array of machines.

'Very impressive, is it not?' Siva was seen saying to Srimathi Liliane: 'A hundred typewriters here means Nirvikalpa Samadhi to me.'

Oh Lord, What a queer Samadhi is this! Siva's realisation consists only of more and more service to humanity. His inner zeal for service manifests itself in the expansion of the organisation. A kowpeen-wallah Sadhu who recorded his thoughts on the inside of used envelopes in 1930 is now in command of an office with ten typewriters rattling his messages fifteen hours a day each. Hundred? Of course, what is impossible for God?

12th OCTOBER, 1948

MODERN RAMANUJA

This will create a Samskara in them: and it may take deeper root now itself or at least in the next birth. Let them all hear the great Mantras. Why make a great fuss about it: say that the initiation will cost the Sadhaka a couple of thousands of rupees, great austerities, etc.?' said Siva as we were leaving the Bhajan Hall after this morning's Vijayadasami celebrations. Suddenly Siva took it into his head to repeat, for all those assembled to follow the Mahavakyas, Sri Vidya Mantra, Navavarna Mantra of Durga and many others. Siva had introduced this 'initiation' that anyone who had a liking for any one of the Mantras may treat it as a sacred initiation ceremony and start repeating the Mantra.

Exactly what Ramanuja did: shouting the Ashtakshara from the top of a temple tower.

ASWAMEDHA SACRIFICE

The Sastriji who was in charge of the ritual Durga Puja gave us all the Prasad, Palika, and sprinkled the Kalasa-water on us all. Siva called out everyone around to receive the holy Prasad.

This is equal to one Aswamedha Sacrifice now-a-days. This is the greatest ritualistic Yajna that can be performed in these days.' remarked Siva.

Friends! Take this as gospel-truth. For, as the trusted messenger of God, Narada says in his Bhakti Sutras, these great ones (like our Siva) alone give Sastra its authority: in other words, they are the progenitors of Sastra, and whatever they say is the truth. The moment the above words came out of Siva's sacred lips, Durga Puja, in our eyes, assumed the role of Asv amedha Yajna.

NO ELECTRIC-SHOCKISM BUT EVOLUTIONISM

Three pieces of westernised Indian civilisation walked in. In the proud arrogance which the late bureaucracy had left as a scar on the body of this great nation, they forgot even to bow to the great sage.

Of course, respect they had for Siva: for they had brought with them a basketful of fruits, as an offering: only folding the palms and bowing the head in reverence were all unknown to them, by nature.

But, Siva quickly taught them: by his own example. One looked at the other, as Siva folded his palms and welcomed them: and decided the best way is to reciprocate it..

You are coming from...?'

'Yes, Swamiji.

You talk Tamil like a Mangalorian."

'May be you are right. We have been living away from our own province for quite a long time now: and so have almost forgotten our mother-tongue.' The accent, diction, and delivery of English were chaste.

Siva asked Vishnuji to bring tea and fruits.

'Oh, no, don't bother. The young lady exhibited a bit of 'manners'. Nor did she mind when it was brought.

Siva then initiated a mild discussion about the language, accents, education, tours of countries, etc.

'We are just coming from Dehra Dun. We went there to see a relative of ours. Accidentally, we dropped in at the School there: and to our astonishment, we found that the Principal there was one of our cousins. Our family is so large, in fact, that wherever we go, we find we have a cousin.'

You might claim me as a cousin, also.' Siva gave a hearty laugh as he said this. 'In fact, the whole world consists of your cousins. All are your cousins only. We are all children of the same God."

The young lady looked up, somewhat taken aback at this remark.

And, the discussion went on: all about the world. And, Siva soon found out that the elder lady was doing some social service through an organisation.

'Please give me your prospectus. You see: many young girls come to me for advice. For instance, yesterday one young girl from Dehra Dun came to me with her mother. She wanted to prosecute her studies in America: to get foreign degrees and then to become a preacher in philosophy. She does not want to marry. She is of a pushing nature, very good in demeanour and of good character. But the conservative mother stands in her way. She is impatient: and in such cases, I thought, that if there was a good women's organisation, it might take charge of the girls, look after them till they are able to stand on their own legs. S.B. can be sent to America and she will be very useful to the country, too. And this organisation should also build an Ashram for ladies. At present, there are no good Ashrams exclusively for ladies. This is a great necessity.'

They all sat spell-bound. Siva later asked V. to entertain them with gramophone records.

Then the gentleman was gradually drawn out of himself: when Siva found there was a little space, he thrust his wisdom-sword deep into this officer. The latent desire in this young officer to learn about Yoga was at once roused up by Siva.

'Yoga does not mean you should run away from home. Real renunciation means renunciation of the ego and the desires. We must have spiritually educated men and women in this land. This education of arts and sciences will take you nowhere. You see: I have started a Forest University here. Yoga, Vedanta, Karma, Bhakti and Hatha Yogas are all taught here. But very few people would want to join this University for some considerable time to come: no doubt, after a real spiritual awakening in India, this would become one of the biggest Universities: but it is run on a modest scale, because young men now are eager to become I.C.S. officers.

'What is there in this ICS? Only slavery. You should desire to become free. That can only be done through the practice of Yoga. You should try to learn Gita, Upanishads, etc.'

'But, Swamiji, we are unable to understand the A.B.C. of these.

For your sake only, I have written these in short poems, in simple books. The essence of all philosophies is contained in the Gita. What you do not find in the Gita, you cannot find anywhere else. Gita is a universal scripture for all times.

You should practise Sadhana. Only when you are young can you do all this. After sixty or seventy, when all the senses have worn out, you will want God. When you can hear nothing, you will thirst for Bhagavatha Katha:

when the eye-sight has failed, you will want to look at good pictures of God or go to temples. Now is the time. Do not lose this.' And, turning to the elder lady, he said:

'Social service is very good. But unless it has a spiritual background, it will not satisfy your soul. Even after hundred years of social service, you will feel dissatisfied. Practice of Yoga will make you perfect: and it will give you the key to making all social services really a divine service.'

Then Siva asked Radha to sing some English songs. Thus was a slight interest created in the trio for Sadhana. Siva at once gave the spiritual diary; presented many books and pamphlets-there they were fully convinced of Siva's doctrines. I was watching the whole process with irrepressible amazement.

As they were leaving (after having been shown round the temple, Guha, etc.) Siva bowed and said: 'Do come again and stay here for some time. I will teach you how to sing all these songs. (He presented a copy of the Inspiring Songs and Kirtans.) I will also teach you Asans, Pranayama, etc.'

Now, they actually prostrated before Siva!

Enrolled!!

All this life-transformation within the short span of a half-hour! Imperceptibly, without making them feel, Siva had taken to the very core of their unbelieving heart, the message of divine life, of Sadhana, of the Lord's name and of the glory of selfless service.

DAUGHTER PARTS FROM FATHER

'She has a tender heart. She is very pious also. And, what is more: in spite of her education and her service in the hospital for twenty years, she still preserves her modesty. See: she will not travel alone.' Siva remarked as Dr. Sundari had taken leave of him to return to her place.

As she stood before Siva, tears welling up in her eyes, with a lump in her throat, she presented the spectacle of a daughter leaving her dearly loved father.

13th OCTOBER, 1948

ROOT TO BRANCH: ALL SAME

It started raining today early in the morning. Every one thought there would be no morning class. The Ashramite deputed to ring the bell thought there was no use doing so: no one to start the class: no lecturers: nor any students. Siva was in the Bhajan Hall, all alone.

Sri Aravamudan was walking majestically along with a small bucket in his hand: when he noticed Siva, at once he put away the bucket and bowed.

'No class, today?' queried Siva.

I am just now coming out of the Bhajan Hall, Swamiji. No one has come this morning.'

Quickly, two or three students were collected. They started Kirtan. Some more joined: and the professors also came in.

LAZINESS

Siva had kept silent over the incident, till he came into the office. Quietly he introduced the topic, intending to instruct.

'I looked out of my Kutir at 5 a.m. It was raining. Then, I waited a little. The rain stopped. Then, I went to the Bhajan Hall to find none there. Everyone thought that I could not come. Then, when they all saw me, they started gathering. It is all due to inborn laziness.

'Even if one man went there, he should start doing Kirtan. The story is told of Swami Ramakrishnanandaji who founded the

Madras Ramakrishna Mission that he would deliver his lectures at the appointed time and place whether there were people to listen to him or not. It is because he had such indomitable will that his Satsankalpa is working even now.'

HEAD AND HEART

On Siva's way back from the Bhajan Hall, S.D. met him and had a few words regarding the attitude towards him of his room-mate, who was disturbing his books and belongings, upsetting his clothes, etc.

'Masterji, you are daily reading Brahma Sutras and Vedanta. If at the same time, you develop a heart of love also, he be the smallest worthy a pice, he would very carefully clean it and then hand it over to me. We should learn these principles.'

SIVA'S ESTATE

A visitor evinced a keen interest in a bulky volume on Siva's table.

This is my Address Book,' said Siva, in which I note down the addresses of all those who come into the divine life fold: editors of journals, professors, headmasters of schools, European and American Sadhakas, etc. It serves me a lot. Whenever a new book is published, it is this book that helps me to send it to various persons who will be benefited by it. These twenty-five years I have gone on maintaining this register. This is the fifth volume.

'Writing addresses of all Sadhakas is to me a greater form of Sadhana than meditation. This is a form of meditation in which not only we, but others, are also benefited. Meditation is necesary: but, along with that, service also is necessary.

'Sadhakas there are all over the world who correspond with me regularly. To them, a book or a pamphlet or a leaflet sent occasionally will act as a tonic. It will rouse them up to greater

effort. I am always fond of reading. And, I advocate reading of spiritual books to everyone. Do not think that it is a waste of time. You keep a thermometer to measure the degree of the cave-dweller's meditation: no doubt, with the help of Asanas, Pranayama, etc., they will try to keep up the meditative mood. But there will be a certain amount of Tamas: and the meditation will not be so vigorous as it would be if they occasionally read a good book: this will rouse up sublime thoughts in them. Nobody should renounce books: no one should give up study of religious books. This is very important. You should, no doubt, read the Gita, Upanishads, etc., daily: but even these alone will not do, though they contain the essence of all Yogas. They will become stale and monotonous. Besides these, you should study all religious literature that you come across. It is this register that gives such spiritual food to thousands of Sadhakas'.

Apart from Siva's point of view of helping the individual Sadhakas in their onward march to the goal, we can readily see how very useful such an Address Book is to a huge organisation. In fact, the Address Book is the foundation on which the Divine Life Society has been built. It is Siva's unceasing endeavour to keep track of everyone who has come into contact with him that has enabled his message to spread throughout the world today. In this, the Address Book has acted as a proof of Siva's patient perseverance: this principle he has kept these twenty-five years: and this 'ceremony' he has performed day in and day out for quarter of a century. It is his estate which he has looked after with great care.

INSPECTOR-GENERAL

Not only this: every day before the packets containing the precious treasure of Siva's books leave the office, Siva would insist on his checking the addresses himself. New-comers to the Ashram: not yet acquainted with certain names of persons and

towns are apt to make mistakes. A lot of postage is wasted: more than this, time! And, the risk involved in these packets being lost in transit. All these are obviated by Siva himself perusing the packets.

'All these are necessary for the organisation,' Siva would say. 'And, what is more: when I read the address and handle the packets myself (I feel that I am myself personally handing the books to the addressee. I also read the name of the addressee (Lord's name), thus it becomes a Japa-Sadhana also.'

Siva does not behave like a few other God-realised souls who neglect to give a proper shape to their noble work. He has seen to it that the mission is firmly established in his own life-time, thus enabling thousands of aspiring souls to be benefited.

JNANA YAJNA

Even in building this organisation, however, Siva has the only motive of spreading the knowledge of divine throughout the world. He does not aim at enriching the organisation with massive structures or properties or estates.

Just imagine this for a moment: the amount which the free gifts of books to Sadhakas by Siva far exceeds the sale proceeds during the same period. One who is commercially interested in building the organisation would have seldom resorted to this: he would naturally have considered the money-value of it all. But, to Siva, it is just the other way: he takes the Jnana Yajna value of it. Thousands of aspirants are benefited by the books. What does it matter if we lose financially? God will give up. But, Siva's mission is to spread spiritual knowledge as widely as possible.

But the Westerners find in this a novel approach. Writes Janis Blazgis of Germany:

I am much obliged to you for your suggestive books: 'Yoga in Daily Life' and 'Psychic Influence' which I received on 5th September. Indeed I am full of joy for such rich present, because for a long time, I have been thirsting for spiritual food, for practical guide books. Above all, I am deeply surprised in receiving from your Divine Life Society so useful books without any payment from my side. Here, in Europe, nobody will do so.'

Of course, nobody with a material outlook on life will do so: but Siva has the only aim of satisfying the aspirants' spiritual hunger. These books are to him: not valued in rupees, annas and pies, but in terms of 'spiritual food' for appeasing the hunger of Sadhakas.

14th OCTOBER, 1948

ASANAS ADVERTISEMENT

There were a few visitors; some of them aged, some with uncouth physical appearance, whom Siva wanted to interest in Yoga Asana practice. Quietly he started a sweet Kirtan: the Mithai Kirtan (in Hindi, Mithai means sweet-meats). As a hint at the Thars, he started with the Mithai Kirtan, as the sweet-meat vendor on the road would sing:

Paisa Paisa Mithai Hai

Garam Garam Mithai Hai

Thaja Thaja Mithai Hai

(The tune is the same as:

'God is Truth, Govinda')

The song started with Sirsasana: Vishnuji demonstrated the Asana and Siva sang its glory.

King of Asanas
Jawahar roj
Gandhi ji
Sirsasana
Kartha Hai

Then Sarvangasana:
Achcha Hai
Wala Hai
Then again he reverted to his Mithai song:

Achcha Achcha

Health-wala

Liked it much

Thyroid gland ko
Long life dene

Mithai Hai
Mithai Hai

Dr. J.R. Sood slipped into the group: he has a physique equal to that of Siva himself. Seeing him do Sirasasana and Sarvangasana, others (old and young) joined. In a few minutes, everyone present had girded up their loins.

From there, the party came down to the terrace opposite the Diamond Jubilee Hall. Padmanabhanji was ready with the still and movie cameras. Miss Annabella ran about here and there finding out her mother's dress for an Asana demonstration. And, Srimathi Liliane first performed alongside Siva himself all the Asanas. Then came a group drill, with Dr. Sood in the middle. Siva stood on one side giving the 'commands':

OM OM OM

This corresponds to the 1 2 3. At the third OM, everyone will be steady in the particular Asana: 'click'-there they are immortalised'.

Siva gazed at Dr. Sood's massive frame: a flash, an idea!

'Come on: doctor saheb. We shall both wrestle!'

Dr. Sood is a very old child of Siva: and he was au fait with Siva's divine simplicity. The doctor was ready. They stood facing each other: Siva stroked his thighs, in the manner of professional wrestlers and they joined hands. The wrestling' continued for quite a few minutes: Siva in a masterly way applied the scissor-cross to Dr. Sood who gave in.

In such a jolly way, Siva taught us that every form of exercise had its own benefits, provided the motive in every case was the maintenance of perfect health to serve humanity, to do Sadhana for God-realisation.

SIVA! THOU ART RUDRA!

A boy had come all the way from South India just to see Siva. Fasting, the tedium of the journey overwhelmed him and he fainted when his object had been fulfilled.

The world slowly vanished before his eyes: a storm raged in his brain and he fell flat beside the chair on which he was.

Siva, who had completely identified himself with the boy, was moved out of his chair by the storm: and he was instantly by the side of the boy, fanning him with tender affection.

'Run out immediately,' Vji was told: 'Fetch water at once.' Vji ran out.

'How many times have I told the people here to keep a bucket of water always ready at hand? What sort of people these are? I have to go on telling them: but there is none to hear me here."

Not when you insult him on his face, not when you commit heinous crimes: not when you wreck his work: not when you scandalise him: not when you throw dung on his face or pelt stones at him: no, not even if you threaten to thrust a dagger into his breast will Siva show the least sign of annoyance or irritability-Service of the Lord in the sick, if you are negligent in this one respect, there the Rudra in Siva manifests himself.

We had from Siva's own lips on this occasion, a glimpse of his own early life, his departure from India and arrival in Malaya, when he, too, felt similarly exhausted. I have detailed this in my book 'Gurudev Sivananda.'

We thought the boy had fits: but Siva was sure that it was nothing but exhaustion. Soon milk was brought, water, etc., and Siva went on fanning the boy with his own hands and the boy recovered soon after, to tell his story.

CALLED

The boy belongs to Pattamadai. When he was on the banks of a canal near Pattamadai, Kanadiankanal, he heard someone whisper into his ears 'Hardwar'. From that time, his mind was in a whirl: he did not have conscious control over his actions: and as though driven by an automaton, he took away Rs. 70 from the purse of his father who was away: and entrained for Hardwar. At Hardwar, he saw the same man whom he had seen in the vision, obstructing his way: but he evaded him and came to Ananda Kutir, the blissful abode of Siva.

Siva had a heart-to-heart talk with him after he had taken his Ganges-bath and refreshed himself with a good meal. The boy had, by this time, completely recovered, not only from the exhaustion, but from the effect of the hallucination he had. And, he revealed that he had to answer an examination in a couple of months: and so wanted to go back immediately.

But Siva persuaded him to stay at Ananda Kutir for a couple of days more: 'Having come here, do Japa on Ganges-bank for at least a couple of days. All this has been for your good only: you have had Ganges bath, and you will do Japa on the banks of the sacred river, too.'

And, the boy has no money to go back. He asked Siva to loan him Rs. 80: readily Siva agreed (to loan to a stranger) and further assured the boy that his father need repay the amount only if he can do so without upsetting the family budget in any way. This is a subtle way of doing charity: for the middle class people would feign reluctance to accept charity, as they would consider it

beneath their dignity to do so: and the best way to help them out of their own self-made cage is to offer it as a loan and assure them that we do not expect repayment.

DESTINY vs. FREE-WILL

Siva was paying a glowing tribute to Sri Swami Sivaswarupji's musical talents, Bhava, powers of entertainment, devotion, etc.

'Swamiji, if you wish, you can become a big Katha Vachaka: you can build a big Ashram and work wonders. Start doing Kirtan and Katha: then slowly go about on Kirtan Prachar. So many will be thirsting to hear you: you will begin to have many admirers-and gradually a huge organisation will come to be built around you. You have the Kesari Yoga. If you only make a little effort, Kesari Yoga will be yours.'

'No, no Swamiji,' replied Sivaswarupji: 'Kesari Yoga is only for you.' This has reference to Sivaswarupji's prediction that Siva alone had Kesari Yoga or the luck of building up huge organisations and work miracles.

I am of a different type altogether,' Sivaswarupji concluded.

'No, Swamiji, you have made a mistake. There is Kesari Yoga for you also: but you have not utilised it.'

'It is not so, Swamiji. I do not have the Sahana Shakti (power of endurance) that you have. I cannot tolerate criticism. I do not like to be spoken ill of: nor to be scandalised. I want always to be quiet and I avoid the thick of the battle of life. Physically also, I am always ill.'

I could at once see that Sivaswarupji was a seasoned and well-developed Sadhu. He has correctly analysed and found out the one superhuman, nay super-divine quality in Siva. Super-divine, because it is said in the scriptures that even Lord Siva got upset when Rishi Bhrigu insulted Him.

Then Siva explained the secret of his own success.

I always keep the body in working order. Maharaj ji, I am not satisfied with walking even: I run for a few minutes daily. I cannot but practise Asanas and Pranayama for at least a few minutes daily. These keep my body fit: in spite of several chronic ailments that reside in the body.

'When you compare me to the other Mahants of several other Ashrams, I am nothing before their learning. Compared to their vast erudition, I am like a shopkeeper compared to a Limited Company.

'But, it is only God's Grace that has enabled me to spread the message of divine life so widely today. It is this God's Grace that has instilled in me the spirit of service. When Sadhus and Sanyasins and devotees of the Lord come to see them, the Mahants will put on saintly airs and remain on their Gaddis: but I will clean their shoes. When a patient is lying sick on the roadside, the Mahant will not even look at him: I will carry him on my shoulders, nurse him and clean his bed-pan. When a needy man comes to my Ashram, I will at once give him some money to satisfy his needs: the Mahant will not even look at him. It is all due to God's Grace.'

Then Sivaswarupji recollected many past incidents (he has been with Siva since the latter's advent into Rishikesh.)

I remember, Swamiji,' he said: 'When you used to serve in Kalikananda Giri's dispensary and established it as a pucca hospital. I remember how, those days, you used to sleep on a damp verandah without even a blanket underneath. The Kutir was a dilapidated one and it was renovated several years later. Who could have endured all that and still served like you?'

And, Siva himself recollected an incident which happened during his Swarg Ashram days.

He had been invited by Maharani Sri Sri Sri Devi to her palace. Siva went there: he sang his inspiring Kirtans and stirred their hearts and infused joy in them all. Then the Maharani was trying to persuade me to stay in the palace itself. I did not like the idea: so I quietly slipped out with just two pieces of cloth. It was winter. I wended my way along the Ganges-canal to Meerut, and thence to Rishikesh. On the way at Parikshitgarh, I received a money order from Sri Satyanandaji asking me to take a photograph of myself for being printed in a book. I returned to Meerut. On my way back again, I could not reach Parikshitgarh before sunset. It was dark: and I noticed a few small huts near the roadside. It had been raining all the time: and I was simply soaked in the rain. I found a. cot lying outside and without much ado, I made myself comfortable on it. Soon someone woke me up and sympathetically told me that that place was not suitable for human beings to sleep (it was perhaps a cattle-shed) and offered to put me up in a cottage filled with straw. I slept there in the night and ran back to Rishikesh the next day.'

16th OCTOBER, 1948

GO ON WITH IT

Dr. Sood has a genuine difficulty: the very recognition of this difficulty raises him high in the esteem of fellow-Sadhakas, for hundreds of even Sadhakas are oblivious of any such difficulty.

'Swamiji, this time I want to learn from you the practical method of self-surrender. You have told me several times to surrender myself to the Lord, and to take everything as His will. I do so. But some terrible occurrence shakes the faith: after some time I regain my faith, to lose it again in another calamity. That creates a lot of

mental restlessness. Swamiji, kindly let me know the secret which will enable me to get established in Atma-Nivedan.'

'Practice!' replied Siva. Then kept silent for a considerable time. There was a studied suspense when Dr. Sood and all of us around were deep in thought: 'Repeat the surrender frequently. Pity yourself when you betray faithlessness. Try to live always in Him, by constant remembrance and Japa. Try to check the impulse to swerve from the faith, before it can arise. Gradually, it will vanish altogether: you will be established in total self-surrender.'

MR. A B C DEE

Sri T.A. Sankara Sastri calls himself T.A.S. Sastry in his letter. This amused Siva, who wrote:

'Kindly always use your full name: abandon this modern craze to shorten it, dropping out the most essential part. Even if you go on signing your full name a hundred times, you repeat your own name a hundred times, that will tantamount to Japa. Sankara! T.A.S. Sastri has just the same significance as A.B.C. DEE! Whereas T.A. Sankara Sastri is an elevating name.'

Then Siva said smilingly:

'I told Sri M. Srinivasan so. He was signing himself M.S. Vasan. I pointed out to him that Srinivisan is the Lord's name, sacred and elevating. And, by cutting it shorter, it loses all its glory. He, at once, caught up with the idea. But there are even now many V. Iyers and N. Iyers and B. Menons, who have yet to learn the glory of the name that their parents have bestowed upon them.

'Our ancients were very wise. They called the children by Lord's names, so that simply by calling out the children, they would have several times repeated the Lord's name. But modern wise men

would run away from a most pleasant form of Sadhana, too. What a pity! They want to run away from God.'

21st OCTOBER, 1948

NO CONDEMNATION

In a letter, I had used slightly strong language discouraging a type of postal tuition in Yoga. Siva would not pass it.

'A Vedantin never condemns. Please take out the offending line.'

All indeed is Brahman: nothing deserves our condemnation, because everyone and everything will evolve into the Absolute in course of time.

UNBEARABLE

A very enthusiastic devotee (who has had some connections with some Sannyasins of another mission, who had initiated him) came up with a big question: 'Can you, Swamiji, find out through your divine vision, the course of my Jiva in previous births, and tell me in what stage of evolution I am, what forces are obstructing my progress, and what I should do now?'

Siva sat immobile for a few minutes: closed his eyes: opened them: then smiled broadly: the visitor looked up anxiously: but Siva kept quiet again!

The visitor probed again.

'Maharaj, if I tell you of your past births, you will be frightened. So, go on with your Sadhana. Japa, Kirtan, meditation, etc., and try to evolve into Godhead.'

The poor visitor missed Siva's first warning sentence: and went on insisting his question. Siva laughed: and said: 'I cannot relate your past lives: Maharaj. You can seek someone else.

(When the visitor was about to leave)

But, I can tell you that you can derive no useful purpose by this quest. Apply yourself to Sadhana. You will realise in due course.'

AID TO SEVA

I had gone to Siva's Kutir for a cup of curd. Presently Siva himself was there. 'Are you taking some medicine?'

Yes, Swamiji, and that has to be taken with the curd.'

Someone interrupted and informed Siva that I had not been taking the regular food for a few days past.

'No, no no. That is no good. You will have to do tremendous work. And, that needs a lot of energy. Eat well: do not have too many restrictions.' Then, with his characteristic bewitching smile, he added: 'I do not know how these young men have developed the baby-stomach. You must be able to digest even stones at this age. Look at me. I may have diarrhoea: but I will take some medicine for that and go on eating my normal food. I will never yield to the threats of the doctors. I want to serve: and these restrictions are hindrances to service.

These restrictions are necessary in the beginning to acquire control over the palate. Then, when you know how to convert all your energy into Ojas and to utilise it in the proper channels, you can and you should acquire all the energy you can.'

DEAD? THEN, OFFER TO GANGES

Siva was on his morning rounds. An aged Sadhu was sick, and Siva was in front of the Sadhu's Kutir. A companion of this Sadhu informed Siva of the latter's condition and suggested that the patient's Poorvashrama relatives should be contacted.

'No, no. He himself would not like that. What has he got to do with those people? He is dead to them. What does it matter if he

gives up this body now? We shall consign his body to the Ganges.'

The compassionate companion was mystified.

And, yet, Siva himself is taking the greatest interest in the quick recovery of the patient.

Siva quickly relieved the companion's misery.

'After all, the body has to perish one day. We should always look to the welfare of the Inner Atman. The Atman is imperishable. Contact with the erstwhile relatives will spoil the purity of the soul. A last-minute attachment might create impressions which might bring about a rebirth.'

So, Siva suggested that the relatives should not come: the soul is saved thereby. If the element-compounded body dies, it can be offered to the Ganges with Maha Mantra Kirtan.

After a few minutes' silence, Siva added: 'Do not worry yourselves. He will be all right soon.'

No wonder: the aged Sadhu is perfectly all right now.

SANKOCHANANDAJI: His Disease and Siva's Cure

'OM Namo Narayanaya, Sankochanandaji Maharaj. Are you taking your Bhiksha here now-a-days?'

'No, Swamiji, I prefer to go to the Kshetra. It gives me a good exercise also.'

Siva at once understood that S. was fighting shy (hence the name Sankochanandaji) of taking his Bhiksha in the Ashram. When S. had left, Siva turned to us.

'See: in S's case, we have failed. Why does he feel shy to come and sit in the dining hall? Because our behaviour towards him has not been cordial and courteous. He is an old and venerable Sadhu

who has led the Sannyasa life for the past thirty years. Their very presence in the Ashram adds to its dignity.

You should not think that everyone should do the same type of work that you do. Sweeping with the broom alone is not Karma Yoga. God has bestowed various faculties on different people. These should be utilised in the best manner in His service. S. can sing beautifully and thrill the audience with his Bhajans and Kirtans. Can you do it, Balan Swamiji?'

'No, Swamiji.'

'At the same time, S. cannot write the thrilling articles and notes that you can. Each one has got a special virtue and qualification. You should, therefore, not have the same yardstick for all.

Even the mere fact that he is a good Sannyasin of long standing should be sufficient to inspire us. One man should take tea to his Kutir: another should give him some fruits and milk: a third one should go with food. Then, he will understand that he is loved here by all. Then he will come into our kitchen of his own accord and take food.' We resolved to act up to this immediately.

YOU SEE GOD IN ME! I SEE GOD IN YOU

A Bhakta from Nilakanth, who is a scavenger by birth, has come. He is sitting outside the Diamond Jubilee Hall just opposite the window to the left of Siva, through which and through the window of his eyes, he is drinking the divine form of Siva. Quickly Siva glanced at him and at once invited him to come in.

Rapid instructions: fruits and milk were brought. Siva offered them to the Nilakantha devotee, who rolled himself on the dust of Siva's feet, uttering 'Siva, Siva'. He sees his own Ishtam (Mahadeva) in Siva. He prostrates to him again and again: then, he started circumambulating around Siva.

It was a feast to our hungry eyes. This Siva Lila. Quickly Siva too started going round the Nilakantha devotee. One' goes on repeating 'Sadasiva', the other 'Radheshyam'. Then they fell at each other's feet. The Nilakantha devotee, himself the very embodiment of humility, was greatly embarrassed and astonished. He soon realised that Siva was humility itself.

ANATHARAKSHAKA SIVANANDA

It was nearing 11 a.m. Siva asked Vishnuji to bring some fruits in a bag. After the 11 a.m. closing Kirtan, Siva was leaving the office with the bag. When I inquisitively looked up, he remarked:

'Almasthanandaji wants to see me and desires that I should be with him and talk to him for at least fifteen minutes a day. I am going to his Kutir now, with these fruits.

What! Everyone here had declared that A. was out of his senses, perhaps out of advancing age. The natural contempt which old age evokes in hot-blooded youth has thus been aggravated by the odd behaviour of A.:no one cared to attend on the old man. Clad in dirty rags, unkempt hair, unshaven beard, uncared-for, A. was roaming about friendless and helpless. Siva, the All-merciful Siva, who sees his own Self in everyone, rushes to the aid of the old Sadhu. Surely, God is Anatharakshaka.

MAN, SUPERMAN, SUPERDIVINE

The evening Satsang is in progress. Little Radha quietly creeps into the Bhajan Hall. She had run up the hillock all alone, even without a lantern in the dark night.

The highly cultured millionaire's daughter would not disturb the quiet atmosphere. Yet, the inner urge is irresistible. She knelt before Siva and made her obeisance.

Siva opened his eyes.

What is the matter, Radha? Why have you come alone in dark?'

The pent-up emotions burst forth into torrential tears.

'Mummy is in a dying condition, Swamiji,' sobbed Radha.

'What!' exclaimed Siva, deeply moved. The Human Heart!

Siva sank into a profound silence. The heavens stood still. Stillness. A strange thrill in the atmosphere as the sage flew into the Beyond. The tragedy of a sorrowful premonition which had afflicted every heart, melted away in the radiation of the Yogi's Bliss. The Super-man Siva emerged out of the Man Siva.

'Come: let us go. Do not cry, Radha. Everything will be all right.'

As they were leaving the Hall, Siva asked Vishnuji to do mental Japa of the Mrityunjaya Mantra.

'Sridhar Swamiji! Please prepare a dose of the stimulant mixture. Also get the smelling salts ready."

With baby Radha at his heels, Siva rushed down.

As he neared the Diamond Jubilee Hall, Siva called out to me from a distance. This was strange. I jumped out.

'Yes, Swamiji.'

'Sridhara Swamiji is in the dispensary. Get the medicines. Quick.' The swift Siva had before uttering the last of these few words gone away towards Ram Ashram where the Shamash family was staying. Such was the speed.

With the smelling salts, I ran to Ram Ashram to find Siva sitting by the bedside of Srimathi Liliane.

'Shampoo her feet with liniment turpentine.'

I applied myself to the task.

Then one by one, the stimulant mixture, grape-juice, etc., arrived and Srimathi Liliane completely recovered.

Mr. Shamash then explained that she had fainted away: and her pulse and heart beating had almost stopped. The children were greatly upset: and in utter distress, the little one ran up. And, said Mr. Shamash: 'She might have passed away, Swamiji. But, five minutes ago, she began to breathe normally. Just before you arrived here, she awoke, as from a sleep.'

A few minutes later, Srimathiji was her normal self once again.

The Super-divine Siva had willed life into her.

25th OCTOBER, 1948

YOUTH AMONG YOUTH

Swami Visweswaranandaji announced, in the office that a small batch of Doon School students had arrived at the Ashram. A few moments later marched in smartly uniformed students of all sizes headed by the imposing personality of the stalwart teacher.

Even a very important and urgent message which was lying on his table could not hold Siva's attention.

In great joy, Siva greeted the Youth. Here and there, several Sevakas rushed to provide the students with tea and light refreshments. After speaking a word individually to each student (and, the freedom which the young students at once take, as though unconsciously, with Siva whom they consider as one of their own!) Siva led them all out of the Diamond Jubilee Hall.

'Do you know the drill?'

'Yes, Sir.'

'But, do you know the Upanishadic Drill?'

'What?': the boys looked at one another and ultimately at the teacher with a querying forehead, as if to ask: Do you?' The teacher and the taught, all were eager to be taught by the Great Teacher.

The boys were quickly arrayed in two rows.

'OM TAT SAT' came the Command from Siva. The boys instinctively stood to attention as Siva himself did so. Now starts the drill.

'Mathru Devo Bhava'

Palms folded at the chest in salutation.

'Pithru Devo Bhava'

Both hands raised above, vertically.

'Acharya Devo Bhava'

Hands brought down in one swing along with a nice folding at the hip as in Padahasthasana and Suryanamaskara.

'Atithi Devo Bhava'

Palms folded at the chest in salutation.

Attention.

'OM Tat Sat'

Then Siva explained the significance of this drill. This is the Upanishadic Drill. The words of command are great utterances of sages in the Upanishads. 'May your mother be your God! May your father be your God! May your teacher be your God! (Here, the escorting teacher bowed to Siva with a visible sign of gratitude for pleading his case). May your guest be your God! These Bhavanas are roused up when you repeat these sentences. Slowly your inner nature is divinised.'

Then: 'Bhaitak' exercise.

'SITA': Fists clenched, fore-arms bent at the elbow and raised, then the entire body lowered assuming a 'sitting on the heels' position.

'RAM': Normal standing position, but with clenched fists, ready for another round.

'OM TAT SAT': Attention.

After a few such exercises with 'Sita-Ram' and 'Radhe-Shyam', Siva led the students in a march, with the marching tune:

'Bhum Bhum Bhum Bhum Mahadeva

Hara Hara Hara Hara Sadasiva

Then Radha (Miss Rose Farida Shamash) did delightful Kirtan and sang and lectured to the students on the essence of Yoga.

Afterwards, Siva let the students demonstrate their class drills. Quickly, a carpet was spread on the terrace opposite the Diamond Jubilee Hall. Here, Siva taught the boys Yoga Asanas and explained their usefulness.

Siva then encouraged the boys to sing. One boy sang nice songs. There was, then, an elocution competition. One of the bright students explained in simple language how spiritual institutions like the Divine Life Society were the crying need of the hour. The Divine Life Society propagates the teachings of the greatest living sage, Swami Sivanandaji. His teachings are published in numerous books, pamphlets and leaflets. The magazine also contains his precious writings. The unique feature in these is the very practical message that Swamiji has for mankind. If all people listened to Swamiji's call, then and then alone will there be peace in the world.'

The students then formed themselves in two groups and requested Siva to suggest a proposition on which they could debate.

The proposition suggested was.-

Divine Life is necessary.

This put to test the boys' creative faculties. It was wonderful how beautifully the boys spoke 'for' and 'against' the proposition.

Standing in the sun, Siva distributed the Prize-books to the boys who took part in these competitions. The boys and the teacher were then served with tea and fruits and given a hearty send-off.

Siva was highly pleased: for, within a brief spell of half an hour, he had sown the seed of divine life in the hearts of these intelligent boys-the future citizens of this glorious land. He also presented a lot of books to the teacher for the use of the School Library.

27th OCTOBER, 1948

SIVA SANKALPA

Early in the morning, as the University class was in progress, I suddenly felt a writhing pain in the stomach. Except a queer sense of discipline instilled by Siva's own stern example on such occasions, nothing could have prevented me from stretching myself in the nearest corner.

When the class broke up, it was yet dark: and Siva could not have even marked the slight trace of the inner feeling which might have escaped the control. I quietly slid into a corner behind the Bhajan Hall pillar, to escape notice.

Vishnuji, do you know Nauli?'

Yes, Swamiji.'

What about Rajagopal?'

I know Swamiji: but I cannot do that,' replied Rajagopalji.

Siva gave a hearty laugh. Then what knowledge is that?'

What a grand truth in it! We know theoretically and intellectually hundreds of things: but never realise that we have to do them if we wish to KNOW them really.

From behind the pillar, I was peeping at Siva's majestic form rocking with laughter.

'Can you do Nauli?' Siva's gaze turned towards me.

Yes, Swamiji.'

'Oh Vishnuji, come: let us see how you do it.'

Vji demonstrated. Then came my turn.

Inwardly I reflected: 'With this pain?' Yet, I could not bring myself to ignore the Word or to bleat my inability. When I actually threw away the shirt and started to demonstrate Nauli, I found that my mind had been effectively taken away from the pain to the performance of Nauli. Very good,' was Siva's comment. Very good, thought I, too: for the pain which was till then progressively becoming worse disappeared mysteriously.

I am not a tenth as astonished as one might be: for this has now-a-days become a natural thing in Ananda Kutir. Whatever Siva thinks or says comes to pass almost instantly.

Sankaranandaji suddenly became ill. In the evening, when I was talking to Siva, I asked: 'How is it that he suddenly became so sick, Swamiji?'

'It is all right. He will be all right soon,' Siva blessed. We could hardly believe our ears: for commonsense would have passed a counter-verdict. What do we know of Divine-Super-sense? Siva left the office to go for a walk. I had to go up the hillock: on my

way, I met Sankaranandaji wrapped in a blanket almost completely well. At night, he was able to resume his duties.

ONE SURVIVOR IN A SCORE

A couple of days ago, when I visited Hardwar, Sri Gopal Dasji of Lahore, now in Dehra Dun, related to me the following account.

'Sri Vimlaji was one of the twenty people in her Mohalla at Jammu, who were all affected by the epidemic of cholera.

Of the twenty, only Sri Vimlaji survived. The death-roll was terrible. Vimlaji's case was also very serious. But she, somehow, survived miraculously. I should say that it is all due to Swami Sivanandaji's blessings.'

Vimlaji has great faith in Siva.

30th OCTOBER, 1948

WHAT A BEAUTY

A delightful panoramic view of humanity.

One family of seven members of graded years-from a middle aged lady of perhaps 45 to an urchin of perhaps five years: but all of them 'big' and literally so. Beautifully attired (both sexes) with all the items of make-up that go to the decoration of modern humanity in the cities, the ladies shone in their own glory: but the largeness' of their features was frightful.

After they left, Siva said, with a broad smile adorning his face:

What is this beauty? If the features are not in proper proportion, if a limb or a muscle is overgrown, everything looks ugly. Even the artificial make-up only makes the figure more ugly. I think the Rakshasis of Ravana's court should have looked like this. What is there in this physical beauty? The Atman is sexless and therefore it is the Beauty of beauties. All else is only ugly.'

NOVEMBER, 1948

1st NOVEMBER, 1948

JADA SADHANA

The morning University class was over. Sridhara Swamiji's most illuminating lecture on the vital need of humility and egolessness in Sadhana and of increasing the Sattva-content in the Sadhaka had left the students athinking.

'Don't you feel, Sridhara Swamiji,' began Siva with a mischievous smile, 'that, besides being of invaluable help to many others, these lectures help to clarify your own ideas and your own evolution?'

'Yes, Swamiji,' admitted Sridhara Swamiji.

Previously, you were saying that you would not lecture until you attained God-realisation!' said Siva with a broad smile. Sridhara Swamiji had no reply.

See, of what great service your talks are now. Your talks for half an hour and Krishnanandaji's talk for half an hour-this one hour benefits how many people! Besides, your own thoughts are clarified. And, while you prepare for the talks, you intensely dwell on the topics. At the same time, it provides a good opportunity for you yourself to introspect, too!

This persistent raising up of thought-forms is more helpful in Sadhana than even the mere repetition of a Mantra. You go on repeating Om Namah Sivaya. It is no doubt, very good: but soon the mind lapses into a Jada State. It becomes a Jada Sadhana. Whereas, if you keep the thought-forms before you, there is a positive awareness. You should keep a couple of Slokas from the Gita and meditate on the significance and import. What the Lord teaches, how one should put the teachings into practice, what are the obstacles, how to remove them, etc., etc.- This way you can have a very good meditation. In the beginning and at the

conclusion of this meditation, you can have Japa and Kirtan. That will then become a wonderful Sadhana, unrivalled in its glory.

'No change is necessary: there is no need to go away from here. This itself is the best place for this kind of Sadhana. Some work is necessary: along with it, meditation also. Then it becomes dynamic Sadhana.'

LOKAH TAT ANUVARTHATHE

Mohanji came in with a small bunch of neem-leaves. Each one of us took a few leaves from it. As the bunch approached each of us, Siva smiled and asked: You also belong to the neem-leaf eating society?'

In Swarg Ashram, when I was there, I started this neem-leaf eating. And, soon I found that all the Sadhus had commenced this!'

(Surely, surely: that is what Lord Krishna said in the Gita: and that is the motive. He revealed, which kept Him active.)

'Neem leaf is very good. It purifies the blood. It is a very good antiseptic. It strengthens the teeth also. But do not take too much. It will heat your system. Just two or three leaves will do.'

ACHINTYA SHAKTI

Swami Vijnananandaji of Poornananda Ashram, Rishikesh, came with a tonga to take Siva to his Ashram. Today, they are celebrating the Samadhi Anniversary of Swami Poornanandaji, and Swami Vijnananandaji wanted Siva to preside over the function.

On the way, Siva made kind and loving enquiries about the Swamiji, his Gurubhais and the Ashram. He gleaned several facts relating to the Ashram activities and also the work of Swami

Poornanandaji. Then the topic turned to P's writings: and Siva enquired if a biography of P. was available.

'Swamiji,' pleaded Vji, 'there are several manuscripts of Poornanandaji still unpublished. I have also written a biography on Swamiji's life. Except for a few small pamphlets, we have not been able to print any major works. It is so very difficult. And, even if we print them, we do not know how to sell them. What are we to do, Swamiji?. I do not know.'

Have you seen our Publication League?'

Yes, Swamiji. But there is no comparison between us. You have infinite power. There is nothing that you cannot do by mere Sankalpa.'

'Poornanandaji himself should have done some work in this respect. He should himself have tried to publish some of his major works. Once a field is created, it is very easy. Even now, just collect his disciples together and find out ways and means of publishing the books. It will become very easy.'

We arrived at the Ashram.

ONE AMONG ALL

When we entered the meeting Pandal, Siva quietly sat behind the assembled Sadhus on the carpet. Requests and persuasion were of no avail: he had actually to be lifted to the chair. He went on saying: This is enough. You yourself take the chair. Or, let the Secretary Saheb (of the Notified Area Committee) occupy the chair."

VIVIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT

The wife of Sri Sukdevji (Vice-Principal of Gurukul- Kangri) sang two delightful prayer-songs.

Sri Swami Vijnananandaji requested Siva to speak and eulogised Siva as the Light of the Himalayas that shed its cosmic lustre throughout the universe.

Siva promised to treat the audience with nice kitchadie (a mixture of English, Sanskrit and Hindi) speech. He began his talk with an OM chant (rather, an OM roar). The audience's voice was at first feeble. This is like Ekadashi! Khub Prem se Karo,' said Siva. Still, there was not any appreciable improvement. How many tons of roties have you consumed! And, yet, when it comes to singing the Lord's names, how feeble the voice becomes. This is like 'murda' Kirtan. This produced some change: but not to Siva's satisfaction. Siva is the master of graded tricks to arouse in anyone love for Kirtan. He turned to the ladies: 'People generally call you Abalas (weaker sex), but your Kirtan is greatly better than the men's!' Again he roared OM: the miracle had been performed. The entire audience followed suit and the sky was rent with OM chanting.

THE PERORATION

Siva spoke of Swami Poornanandaji's qualities. 'He was a beautiful combination of Vairagya, Karma, Bhakti and Brahma Jnana. He embodied in himself the Yoga of Synthesis. He was not like some Vairagies who run away from work. Nor was he like some Sannyasin-social-workers who have no trace of Vairagya in them.

'His writings have a special charm. They have come out of his heart. They are the outpourings of his heart that have sprouted forth from a direct realisation of the Absolute.'

'He was a perfect master and a strict disciplinarian. How nicely has he trained his disciples! Every one of his disciples is a standing proof of his glory. Swami Jnananandaji, Swami Vijnananandaji, Swami Achyutanandaji, Swami Mahanandaji-all are fortunate to have been trained by Swami Poornanandaji. They

are all hard workers in the Adhyatmic field. They are full of divine virtues.

Poornanandaji's writings are precious and voluminous. So are his inspiring letters. They should all be printed now. It is easily possible if all his disciples unite and work together. That was the secret of success in the case of Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda and others. The eleven apostles joined together and spread Ramakrishna's Mission. Swami Poornanandaji also belongs to the class of lions of Vedanta like Vivekananda and Ram Tirtha, etc. His disciples should now set to work spreading his mission.

Unity is strength. The unique position that the Ramakrishna Mission has achieved now is all due to the combined effort of all the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. There is no institution like the Ramakrishna Mission: just look at the number of Branches all over the world it has got. How wonderfully has the mission grown. The secret of their success is united effort.'

Then he dwelt on the need for spiritual institutions. 'Spiritual institutions are the dire need of the hour today,' he declared.

Again he sang some Kirtans. From Saguna, he turned to Nirguna also. The sweet names of the Lord will give you Moksha, peace and bliss. Now, let us sing some Nirguna Kirtans also.'

'Jagat Kalpana; Jiva Kalpana; all is Kalpana; Deergha Swapna'

The speech, interspersed with appropriate quotations from the Gita and the Upanishads was thrilling, inspiring and at once practical. Siva concluded with the benediction: 'May you all be happy! May God bless you with health, long life, peace, prosperity and Kaivalya!'

He was followed by a few others.

Swami Devanandaji commenced his lecture with words of profound reverence and admiration for Siva. From his Kutir on the bank of the Ganges, Swamiji has been able to influence the entire world; even as the sun from his abode in the horizon is able to shed his lustre to illumine the entire universe.'

Swami Vijnananandaji then entertained us to tea. Siva presented several of his books to the Ashram library and also distributed pamphlets and leaflets to the assembled devotees. As we were about to leave, Siva quickly walked inside and quietly slipped into the pockets of one of the Ashram authorities ten rupees as a love-offering.

The Secretary of the Notified Area Committee expressed his gratitude to Siva for the trouble the latter had taken to attend the function. I deem myself greatly blessed to have had Your Satsang and to have listened to your thrilling discourse.

Why? There was Punditji's lecture-it was truly a learned discourse, wasn't it?'

'But, Swamiji, no one can approach your holiness in thrilling oratory, both inspiring and practical.'

We started on foot. For, we had disposed of the tonga in which we went. Siva had told the tonga-walah: You can go. I will go when I like. You need not wait.' A Sannyasin or a Vedantin never likes to bind himself. This is a great lesson. For, ordinarily, people will plan, prepare, promise all sorts of things: and get worried.

From the bazar, we took another tonga and returned to the Ashram.

SILENT ELOQUENCE

Some construction questions were being discussed.

'Besides these massive structures that we are building, there should be several Virakta Kutirs away from the crowded places. We should choose a place somewhere in the jungles and construct small Kutirs, modest, simple, neat-with an eye on their utility. Nothing except a water-pot, a few books, a blanket, should be taken there. Those (like Krishnanandaji) who want to meditate for a while, away from the places of intense activity, should retire to these Kutirs. Food should be sent to them: they should have no anxiety on this score. Here, they can practise intense meditation for some days, till they themselves feel inclined to work again.

Then there should be a Dhyana Hall. This also should be a little away from the crowd. It should be perfectly clean and unfurnished, except for a couple of pictures, etc.: and absolute silence should prevail inside and outside the Hall. Anyone should go inside the Hall and sit in meditation.

Then, similar to the present Bhajan Hall, there should be another Bhajan Hall where devotees should go on singing Bhajans. Harmoniums, Tanpuras, Tablas, etc. will be kept there. If this is somewhere near the temple, the Yatris and visitors also will get inspiration from the Bhajan.

This way, the entire locality will illustrate the various Yogas and the various stages of evolution. Those who come should, without a spoken word, be taught Yoga. They should be inspired by the mere sight of these buildings.

'We have already got the temple, the Akhanda Kirtan and the Yajnashala. All the Brahmacharis here should be made to offer Ahuties daily according to the Vedic rules. There should also be daily Havans of Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra, Maha Mantra etc.

'All these things will have a tremendous effect in the long run.'

Sri R. Thyagarajan of Murtaspur who was listening to these outpourings of Siva's soul at once placed at Siva's lotus feet Rs. 10 as an advance for the construction of one Virakta Kutir.

Siva's Will works out almost immediately.

2nd NOVEMBER, 1948

THOUGHT POWER

Siva was in the dispensary. I went there and informed him that Sri Pt. Suka Devji, Vice-Principal of the Gurukul-Kangri, one of the participants in yesterday's function at the Poornanand Ashram had come to the Ashram with his wife and another.

Has he? Good. I wanted to talk to him yesterday itself. And, also I thought, if you had brought more copies of the magazine and some more books with you, I could have given him. It is good that he has himself come.' So saying Siva came to the office, and greeted the visitors.

Up sprang several Sadhakas from the office and returned within a few minutes with fruits, almond, gramophone records, books, leaflets, etc. Sri Suka Devji was simply overwhelmed by Siva's love.

After a few words of greeting, Mrs. Suka Devji requested Siva to visit Kankhal and the Gurukul University.

Last year I visited Gurukul.'

Is it so, Swamiji?

'And, after going through the buildings, I got up on the lecture platform and did many queer things. I delivered a lecture to a no-audience.' Little do we, mortals, realise who your audience were!'

After a few minutes of gramophone records playing, Siva requested Sri Suka Devji and party to be shown round the Ashram.

There is also a Yoga Museum here,' said Siva: 'I have made an attempt at picturising the principles of Yoga. Then there is the Yajnashala: something like the Yajnashala in Gurukul. We are also holding classes in the morning where there are short talks on Karma, Bhakti, Vedanta, Yoga, etc. It is all on a humble and simple scale.'

Just look at Siva's humility. If the criterion of a University's greatness is its vital need and its service in the uplift of Man, no other University in the whole world can approach the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University. (The "University" was converted into "Academy" in 1958.) It has got no parallels in the world. A founder of any other University (even though much inferior to this Forest University) will blow his own trumpet till the hearers become deaf and are thus incapacitated to listen to the simple call of the Supreme.

After going round the Ashram, the visitors left for Hardwar.

7th NOVEMBER, 1948

ALL THE WAY FROM ENGLAND

All the way from England came Dr. P.N. Rampal accompanied by Sri Krishanlal Sharma (District Forest Officer) and Mrs. Sharma, who arrived a little while after Siva had left the office. Time at their disposal was limited: and they had to leave for Delhi the same evening. So, Sharmaji sent in a note to Siva. Within a couple of minutes, came Siva. Visibly moved and perceptibly surprised, the visitors prostrated at his feet. He took them to the office. In loving conversation, Dr. Rampal was immersed. Siva presented them with several books. At a mere wink from Siva,

several Sadhakas till then sitting quietly in their seats, sprang forth, eager to serve. Dr. Rampal evinced keen interest in Siva's books. He bought a number of them. If they were late for Siva's Darshan, they were rather too late for the noon meal. Siva took the visitors to the kitchen himself. There he mingled with the Ashramites and ensured that the visitors were comfortably seated and the giant worker Swami Visweswaranandaji at once busied himself with the preparation of food for the visitors. Then and then alone would Siva leave the dining hall. He had not taken his food till then. After food, Dr. Rampal sat enraptured as the gramophone records sang delightful songs for him. He then visited the Mandir, etc., and left. His gratitude was profound: he promised to convert his office in England into a virtual D.L.S. Branch. Such is the miracle of Siva's love.

8th NOVEMBER, 1948

DAY OF BLISS

Siva-Anandam! That is today!

Earliest to arrive at the Siva Mandir was Siva himself. Today had been chosen as the auspicious day for the installation of the Kalasha in connection with the Ati Rudra Yajna.

We took bath and carried water to the Mandir, with the Maha Mantra Kirtan.

We found in the temple Siva himself sitting in front of Siva, immersed in Siva Anandam. I laid my head at His lotus feet.

The Kalasha was blessed for Siva quenched its thirst with Ganges water offered with his own holy hands.

The Puja started: and came to a close at 11 a.m.

Swami Visweswaranandaji had made elaborate arrangements to celebrate the monthly birthdate of Siva. Vishhuji had delightfully decorated the dining hall. We stepped in, to distribute Siva's Prasad to the inmates who, with Siva himself at their head, chanted the 15th Chapter of the Gita and the Maha Mantra. It was really a day of great festivity.

When the dinner was almost over, Siva sang a beautiful hymn. Others too followed. All had finished their meals. Some had left some vegetables etc., on their leaf. Siva's eyes fell on these.

'Visweswaranandaji, please see that nothing is wasted. All that remains on the leaves should be collected and given to the cattle. Also, please send for the health officers (this is the only name by which Siva can refer to the scavenger) and feed them nicely.'

There is a wonderful philosophy and a lesson in psychology in this. Siva does not chastise those who have not consumed what they took, nor those who served, nor does he instruct the management to reduce the quantity prepared but goes straight to the core of the problem.

There is no waste: everything has its own use, in the cosmic sense. The animals and the fish in the Ganga get their share. What a great heart!

10th NOVEMBER, 1948

I.C.S. AT ANANDA KUTIR

The morning closure Kirtan was in progress at the office. Just after it had begun, Sri S.Y. Krishnaswami, I.C.S., joint secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, and Mrs. Krishnaswami quietly and modestly entered the Hall and sat down just behind Siva who was himself sitting on the floor.

Srimathi kamala introduced herself to Siva. Siva presented them with some books and was talking to them.

Then Siva requested them to take their food at the Ashram.

‘Swamiji, to have your Darshan is a greater blessing than food. Your Darshan alone was what we sought to have here, and that is what we need more than food,’ said Sri Krishnaswami.

‘Just as Sri Vishwanath Prasad…(turning to us)… Please arrange for everything and take them round the Ashram, too.’

They informed Siva that they were proceeding from the Ashram to Mira Behn. Siva eulogised Mira Behn’s work and asked me to take some books from him for the Pashuloka Library, and a letter from Siva, and escort the couple to Pashuloka Ashram.

While i was playing Siva’s records, Srimathi Kamala sat enraptured listening to the sweet melody. She said that she had already got of the records.

PERSONAL FREEDOM

At night Siva came into the office on his way to the Bhajan Hall. There was a message which was waiting for him: he desired to peruse it.

'Omkarswamiji, have you got my spectacles here?'

Yes, Swamiji,' sprang up Swami Omkaranandaji and brought them.

I cannot depend upon one pair of spectacles. See now: I have left the usual pair in the Kutir. If this had not been kept here, then this work would have suffered. When I used to go out of Rishikesh also, I used to take three pairs of spectacles. If one broke, the others will at once come into service. There will be no loss of time and there will be no impediment to the service.

'Even in the case of the purse, I observe the same rule. Whenever we travelled, I should divide the money between those who accompany me. Swarupanandaji will have a purse: and Atmanandaji, too. If one purse is lost, the other will be saved.

This has another advantage, too. Those who travel with me do not have to ask me for money to purchase, whatever they might like. Some people are shy: they may not like to ask for money. But I take care that they get the fullest freedom to eat what they like or to purchase what they like, and so I give them a purse.' That is Siva's characteristic.

Few others are like that. Mahants or officers, when they take their attendants with them would not, on the other hand, like that the latter should share their conveniences and privileges. They would have their toast and tea: but let that fellow eat channa' would be their mentality.

11th NOVEMBER, 1948

WAY TO WORLD PEACE

Sri Sreenivasadasa Poddar had come to the Ashram just when we had finished the noon meal. Siva had also gone to his Kutir a few minutes back. Sri Poddar wanted to see Siva. An imposing personality!

I went to Siva's Kutir with a chit from Sri Poddar. After a strenuous morning (it should be remembered that Siva attends the morning class punctually at 5 a.m., and from that moment, he is busily engaged in multifarious activities), Siva was reclining, gazing at the Himalayas, perhaps in silent contemplation of its majesty. I showed him the chit and asked: 'May I bring him here, Swamiji?' for, I felt that even we would have felt irksome to be called out like that.

Siva, on the contrary, at once jumped out and buttoned his alphi: 'I am coming, myself."

'Sreenivasdas Poddar? Yes, yes: I have seen him before. He is a rich Marwari, full of ideas. He will always keep himself in contact with all the Mahatmas and always engage himself in schemes and plans. He also printed the Sankirtan pamphlet long ago.'

We reached the spot near the Viswanath Ghat where the Poddar-party was standing. After the usual greetings and Pranams, Sri Poddar introduced to Siva, his family.

This boy, Swamiji, has been thoroughly influenced by your books. After reading your books, he has given up many evil habits like smoking. His life has been revolutionised. Your books have a tremendous influence over people.'

Then the topic turned to his own scheme. 'Swamiji, what is the way to ensure peace in the world? I have a plan, Swamiji. With your suggestions and help, I hope to do a lot."

Where is the world, Maharaj? It is all a dream. Why do you worry yourself about a thing that does not exist?'

Sri Poddar was mildly surprised to receive this Vedantic reply. Siva continued: If we reform ourselves individually, the entire world will be reformed. Therefore, do Japa, Kirtan, Dhyan, and practise Yoga. Everything will be all right.'

12th NOVEMBER, 1948

WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH

'Sivapremji, does Sri...know English? Shall I send him some English books?' queried Siva, referring to a big business magnate.

'Yes, Swamiji, he has a working knowledge of English. He may be able to read Swamiji's books.'

'What is working knowledge? Two men going Madras, tiffin ready Mayavaram?'

'Yes, Swamiji, something like that.'

There is a beautiful story. Do you know? I shall tell you. A station master of a small station in South India knew very little English: he had, what you call, a working knowledge. One day, an Inspector took him to task for delaying a train. The poor station master explained: 'One pointsman running that side, Sir; the other pointsman running this side, Sir: I-eyyyyyy ringing the bell, Sir.'

We burst into laughter. Sivapremji joined in it: for he has during his four-years' stay at Ananda Kutir picked up more than a working knowledge of Tamil, at least enough to understand the joke. The Tamil equivalent for 'I myself' is 'Naa-ney'. And, this station master had taken the English pronoun and added the Tamil emphasis (the suffix of eyyy). That is 'working knowledge'.

'Anyhow,' continued Siva, I shall send him some books. If he does not understand them, he will pass them on to his friends. That is enough for me.'

That is Jnana Yajna.

CHARITY BY FORCE

Padmanabhaswamiji, please write to Durga Saranji for a good parcel of Khaja. Tell him that our family is very big and that he should send a good lot."

I wondered within myself: 'Why should Swamiji ask for this sweetmeat'? Siva had 'heard' the thought.

This is one kind of charity for them. And, this is my method of making people do charity. Even if they voluntarily do not give, I would take them by the ear and make them do some charity. Do you think we long for this sweetmeat? All sweetmeats are the

same: they are all permutations and combinations of sugar, dhall and ghee. But this is one of the methods of enabling Durga Saranji to give, to evolve and to purify his heart.'

And, I remember another occasion. It was about a year ago. Srimathi Kailasavathy of Lahore and her family were all here. Her sister, Srimathi Vimala, one day, came into the office with her son. This child had fever.

'Swamiji, please see what the matter is with this boy. He gives me a lot of trouble.' The tone was extraordinarily familiar. I was amazed; I sat up.

Take him to the dispensary. Give him some medicine', said Siva, as though unconcernedly.

'No, Swamiji, please you yourself examine and give some medicine.'

'My medicine is only this Prasad.' Siva handed her some Bhasma and Kumkum, perhaps to test her faith. Or, as a lesson to us?

'I am quite content, Swamiji: I know he will be all right.' Then Siva examined the child medically and gave a prescription. While the mixture was being prepared....

'Ohji, what about giving me a glass of your famous Dogra-tea?'

'Yes, Swamiji, I shall just now prepare and give you. Shall I go?'

'Not only for me. My family is very big. Don't you know? You will have to supply for all.'

At once she counted the number of Ashramites present in the office: 'Yes, Swamiji, I shall prepare tea for all of them.'

By this time, the medicine had also come: after a Pranam to Siva, she left.

Within an hour, the tea arrived. After taking just a mouthful, Siva handed the rest of his glass to me. And, for all in the office, there was tea. During the course of this tea-party, Siva smiled and, understanding the cause of my silent wonderment, said: 'Such a pure heart!'

That is the secret of such intimate familiarity with the Master.

The effect of this compulsory charity was miraculous and immediate: the child was completely all right within a few hours.

13th NOVEMBER, 1948

PLANNED DAYS AGO

Radha's Birthday. (Radha is Srimathi Liliane Shamash's second daughter.)

With Siva, the Birthday dawned several days ago. Saswatji had been sent to Dehra Dun to purchase presentation articles, and he has returned with them. Flowers were asked to be preserved in the Garden two days ago. Fruits were purchased yesterday: so were sweets for distribution.

Siva was the first on the scene. 'Vishnuswamiji, bring a few blankets. Spread them on the cement benches. Aravamudan, bring a carpet and spread it here. Come: ring the bell. Venkatesanandaji, collect everyone here. Let us do Kirtan now.' And, Siva himself started with OM chanting, Jaya Ganesha and Maha Mantra Kirtan.

Siva himself brought the Shamash family and garlanded them. After a few minutes' Kirtan, Siva announced:

'OM. Today is Sri Radha's birthday. Radha is the second daughter of Srimathi Liliane. She is nine years old today: this is her tenth birthday. Let us all do Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa. This is a very great Mantra. It removes all accidents. It bestows long life

on man. It is a prayer to the Almightly, Omnipotent Lord. It is a prayer to the Lord with Three Eyes, Who has the Eye of Intuition. Sugandhim is One who is the Abode of Auspiciousness, of Omnipotence, of Omniscience, of Power, Peace, Joy, Knowledge and Bliss. Pushtivardhanam-one who bestows vigour, health and long life on us. And, we pray that our bondage may be rent asunder; that accidents may drop away from us like the ripe cucumber fruit drops off the creeper. May we become immortal! That is the prayer. This prayer bestows both Bhukti and Mukti on us. Both are necessary. Without a certain amount of material wealth and prosperity, one cannot live and aspire to realize God. Mukti is the final goal of all. Lord Siva will be easily pleased and will bestow on us all Bhukti and Sayujya Mukti.'

Siva then asked Radha to sing the Maha Mantra: Annapurna to sing Jeya Narayana': and their mother Srimathi Liliane to sing 'Raja Rama Rama Ram'. After this...

He himself sang the delightful Yukti-ful songs where he combined wonderfully the names of the Shamash family members and divine names.

Sita Ram Sita Ram Sita Ram Bol

Radhe Shyam Radhe Shyam Radhe Shyam Bol

Radha Radha Radha Radha Jai Radha

Radha Rosie Radha Rosie Jaya Rosie

Jai Annapurna Annapurna Annapurna

Jai Annabella Annabella Annabella

Jai Sri Lakshmi Jai Sri Lakshmi Jai Sri Lakshmi

Jai Liliane Lakshmi Liliane Lakshmi Liliane Lakshmi Shyama Shyama Shyama Shyama Shyama

Shyama Shyam

Shamash Shamash Shamash Shamash Shamash Shamash

A smile of admiration played on everyone's lips.

Today is Radha's birthday. And, on that account we have had an opportunity of singing the Lord's names. We have also performed Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa. It is very good for the child, for the entire family, for all of us who have assembled here. May Srimathi Liliane, Annapurna and Radha live long! May God bless them, and all of us with health, long life, peace, prosperity and Kaivalya Moksha!'

ABIDING INTEREST

Brijlalji Kapoor of Bareilly has come: and he introduced his son to Siva. During the course of the conversation, Siva understood that B. was eager to retire from Vyavaharic life and spend his time in silent meditation in the Himalayas. Siva told the son:

'It is now your duty to fulfil your father's wishes. He has carried his burden long enough. You must now relieve him. Both you and your sister are earning. You must now take on the family responsibilities yourselves and enable your father to fulfil his spiritual ambitions'.

Such is Siva's love for the Lord's devotees. He must see to it that they are well provided for their Sadhana. It is a great service to thirsting aspirants.

AN OLD ADEPT HATHA YOGI

Sri Brahmji and two of his devotees came into the office. At once Siva recognised Brahmji.

'Om Namo Narayanaya, Brahmji Maharaj. Anand?' As the enquiries were going on, Vishnuji brought some fruits and laddus.

Then Siva humorously reminded Brahmji of his Yogic Kriyas.

You remember, you used to drink air and pass it through the anus?' And then also told us that Brahmji used to live on top of trees at night while at Swarg Ashram, sleeping on the trees themselves.

'He used to observe Mowna also. He would run hither and thither shouting 'Brahm, Brahm'. He now lives in Gangotri, one of the leading figures there. He can live on air alone for a long time.'

At this stage, Brahmji himself demonstrated the Kriya (Vayu Bhakshana).

Introducing Vishnuji, Siva said: This is our Yogiraj, Swamiji Maharaj.' Then Vji demonstrated a few Asanas. The adept Hatha Yogi Brahmji demonstrated several Asanas.

WHAT ABOUT SWAMIJI MAHARAJ?

An old lady from South India arrived at the Ashram and was directed to the office. Siva was working there, and was also talking to the aspirants in the office on the glory of the name, Bhakti, etc. He was returning to his Kutir, when the lady asked an Ashramite: 'What about Sri Swamiji Maharaj? Where can I see him?' She was told that she has all along been in his presence only. She ran forward and apologetically fell at Siva's feet and prayed for his blessings. Siva's winter clothing-over-coat, etc., deceived her.

AMBASSADOR TO GENEVA

Sri Lakshmi Narayan Chetlur has been in the Ashram for the past few days. He has been away from India for a considerable number of years: and is now practising as a lawyer in Geneva. He has been a student of Yoga, too: and has taken advantage of his visit to India to spend a few days in Ananda Kutir also. Siva had asked Vishnuji to teach Sri Chetlur all Asanas and Pranayamas. Siva

himself has been giving him short talks on spiritual topics, how to organise spiritual associations, the daily routine, personal Sadhana, collective Sadhana, etc. He has given Sri Chetlur several books, magazine copies, leaflets: Chetlur is completely overwhelmed by Siva's love. On the eve of his departure, Siva gave him several of the gramophone records.

Your Indian Association (of which Sri Chetlur is the Secretary) should have as its basis, the spiritual culture of India. Divine Life is the common basis of all organisations: otherwise no organisation can thrive. God is the root of the entire humanity. All institutions should be based on God if they are to survive.' Then Siva gave him several instructions as to how to reorientate the outlook of the Europeans and turn them to God. Your Indian Association should convert itself into a Yoga School. I shall also send you regularly magazine, books, Prasad, etc. Now you can go back and face huge audiences boldly and talk to them on Yoga, Vedanta, Patanjali Yoga Sutras, etc.' Sri Chetlur has been regular in attending the morning classes and has thus acquired a fair knowledge of Yoga.

JEAN HERBERT

Jean Herbert has sent a complimentary copy of his French translation of Swami Vivekananda's Jnana Yoga.

What wonderful work Jean Herbert is doing! He is really a Sannyasi,' said Siva. 'See: he is the chief interpreter of the U. N. O. Then he is writing several articles to philosophical journals. He translates good Indian books into French. He looks after their publication. Marvellous work!

'Sannyasins also should be like this only. Mere cave-dwelling will only lead to their deterioration. Sannyasa-life should always mean active life. Do not mistake Sannyasa for lifelessness: lifelessness is the property of a dead body.

'What is there in simply closing the eyes? You should actively see God everywhere. Brahman is all this. Active renunciation of egoism and expansion of consciousness alone can bring about final release from bondage.'

MATHUR'S GITA

Sri Ram Mohan Mathur of Allahabad had a small pocket-book. When he had had Siva's Darshan and when he went to the Diamond Jubilee Hall, he sat there and pulled out his pocket-book and started reading. That constant companion is 'Pearls of Wisdom' of Siva. He told Siva when the latter enquired what it was that he was reading:

'Swamiji, it is your book Pearls of Wisdom'. It is a marvellous little work. I always carry it with me. Daily I have to travel in a shuttle service to Allahabad. I always read this book during this time. Whenever I have a few minutes' leisure, I read a few pages. It is such a wonderful book which contains stirring ideas which at once give me peace, joy and mental health. It is really my Gita.'

GOD IS FULLNESS

'Unless you make an effort, you will remain the same Aravamudan even after ten years!' Sri Aravamudan was electrified as Siva said this. 'God has given you so many faculties. You have got a very good taste for Tamil literature. You should develop that. You must be able to prepare roties also. You should know proof-correction, and printing technique. And, accounts too. You should be able to deliver lectures: conduct classes! All-round development is Yoga. You should develop all your faculties. One-sided development will soon make for dullness: all-round development will make for fullness. You will never feel tired. There will be ample opportunities of alternating your work whenever you feel the need for change. That is the secret of success.

'And, your root should all the time be in divine life. You may learn Sanskrit from some teacher: you may learn Hatha Yogic Kriyas from some Yogi: accountancy from some masters: but you should always say 'OM Namo Narayanaya' to all these after finishing your work and devote yourself heart and soul to divine life work. There is nothing all of you together cannot achieve. Each one of you should be able to turn out five men's work. There is tremendous power within you. You should take care of your health, too. Eat good food: practise Asanas, Pranayama, Suryanamaskara: run a few furlongs. Then, practise Kirtan, Dhyana: study good spiritual books. Practise delivering lectures. You will soon become supermen.'

With thy blessings and guidance, soon we shall be.

14th NOVEMBER, 1948

LIGHTNING VISIT AND LIGHTNING HOSPITALITY

Sri Malhotra, the Society's auditor, arrived at the Ashram early in the morning along with Mr. and Mrs. Sondhi.

At the distant sight of Siva, Sri Malhotra bowed. He had specially come to Rishikesh to offer his Pranams to Siva and inform him that it was due to unavoidable reasons that he could not send his assistants to audit the Society's accounts which will be taken up soon.

Siva at once took him in and nicely entertained him with milk and fruits. Sri Malhotra informed Siva that his mother was not in good health. On hearing this, Siva at once brought Chyavanaprash from the Ayurvedic Pharmacy and presented it to Sri Malhotra, to be used by his mother.

But, Sri Malhotra insisted on paying for it. He is so much devoted to Siva that he always declines to accept any remuneration for

auditing the accounts of the Society. He knows the invaluable, divine currency in which his services to the Society will be paid.

Deputy Collector Dwaraka Singhji met Siva on the Swarg Ashram road, on the Ganges bank. After the usual enquiries, D.S. told Siva: 'Swamiji, I have a number of your invaluable books. I follow your instructions in so far as I can. I practise Asanas also. But, Swamiji, I am at present about 55 years old. Can I do Sirsasana without any risk?' 'Of course, you can.'

'But, Swamiji, some people say that we should not practise Sirasasana after a certain age and that there is some risk in doing so."

'What is without risk, Maharaj? When you walk on the road, you may be knocked down by a motor-car. When you ride in a boat, it may capsize and you may be drowned. Still, we have to go on doing these things.

Similarly, practise Sirsasana with the help of a wall, for a few seconds. Try. If it does you any good, continue the practice and increase the period. If you notice any evil effect, stop it!'

In the meantime, a passer-by Pundit approached Siva with an air of learning and commenced a mild discourse in Sanskrit, Siva simply looked at him, as if to remind him of the first verse of 'Bhaja Govindam'. Just at that very moment, another Pundit (known to Siva) was approaching the party from the opposite direction. Siva introduced one to the other: they soon entered into a heated discussion. Siva smiled significantly and walked on. D.S. quickly understood the import and said: 'You have done the right thing, Swamiji. Let them fight.'

I do not know why people waste their energy in idle discussions. One should be absolutely practical.'

HEART-REMOVER

A party of high railway officials (all friends of Sri D.C. Desai, a close disciple of the Master) was waiting for Siva in the office, and greeted him with a Namaskar when Siva came in. One of them was greatly interested in Asanas and Pranayama.

I am able to do all the Asanas, Swamiji. But, this Paschimottanasana seems to be beyond my capacity.'

'Practise! The difficulties will vanish soon.'

At once, the officer jumped out of the bench, sat on the floor with his legs thrown in front and demonstrated. Up to this extent I can do it, Swamiji.' He bent forward and touched the toes.

That is wonderful. It is fifty per cent Paschimot- tanasana. Even that is quite sufficient in your case."

The topic turned to the therapeutical value of Asanas and Pranayama. One of the officers had blood pressure and Siva was showing him how to do Sitali Pranayama. To another, he taught Bhastrika to ward off drowsiness and to get abundant energy.

An officer explained that a few years before, all his teeth were removed and that resulted in a sudden decline in the state of his health. That has greatly upset his Sadhana: and he is unable to get up early in the morning, unable to walk a few miles at one stretch, unable to exert himself.

'My advice is,' said Siva: 'never go to a dentist unless the case is very bad. Many of these doctors have a mania for 'removing'. Removing teeth, removing tonsils, removing appendix, removing lungs!'

They have not yet come to removing man's heart, Swamiji,' said someone.

'But, Swamiji himself has been able to do that!' said another: and they all laughed. Siva was silent.

'Swamiji, how silently and quickly you remove our hearts! I think you are the only doctor in the whole world who can do this!'

After some further conversation, Siva said: 'Achchaji, Badee Kripa. You must all be busy and so you might want to go."

Two of them were not very particular to leave: but, he has to'. And, this gentleman remarked: 'Swamiji is the greatest Karma Yogi. He is always busy. Therefore, he should have a lot of work to do."

Before taking leave, they learnt from Siva several easy exercises, 'old-man's bed exercises', etc.

Siva taught them how the very act of getting up from bed might be converted into a proper exercise, how simple movements of hands and legs, when done systematically, and with regulation of breath, might form good exercises.

'Lie down on your bed and raise first one leg, then the other, as far as you can. Then, try to get up without the help of your hands.

'Stand erect and try to bend and touch the toes. With hands on the hip, twist the trunk this way and that. These are all exercises which will gradually tone up the system.

15th NOVEMBER, 1948

THE AWAKENER

Cold wind blows aggravating the effects of winter. Men adore the vertically placed mud that might have lain uncared for in the bosom of the earth. The woolen blanket clings to the body. The faint vibrations of the loud report of the Swarg Ashram bell mingles, as a quiet rendezvous on the right bank of the Ganges, with the melody that emanates from the rhythmically sounded bell at Siva's Bhajan Hall: and they pay their morning obeisance to Siva.

Within a few minutes, a solitary figure emanates from this rendezvous. In that calm stillness, his very footfalls are resonant with the names of the Lord. The cold blast has long ceased to worry him: though his garments are disturbed by the winds, the real HE is far, far away in the very heart of wind itself and yet beyond. He has realised long ago that the mud-houses (why, even the fleshy tabernacle built out of divine-clay) are all ephemeral, and he has sought and gained his own Abode, Brahman. That is our Siva. Let us greet him at this glorious hour of our." own life-the Brahmamuhurtha of Divine Life. 'OM Namassivanandaya.

Sri Brij Bihari Lal Kapur and his family are on a visit to the Ashram. With his characteristically majestic gait, Siva approaches Sri Kapur's Kutir. 'OM OM OM. (Silence).... OM OM OM.... (Still no response)..... Jingling of bangles announces the wearer's response: the door is opened: astonished at this unexpected presence of the Master at their door, the family prostrate before him.

OM Namo Narayanaya!' Siva has seen his Narayana. Come: wash your face and go to the morning class at the Bhajan Hall.'

Siva awakens the slumbering: nay, not only that: he leads them on.

At the conclusion of the class, the party confessed that it was Siva's grace that enabled them to spend the morning hours most profitably.

WOMEN'S LIGHT AND GUIDE

Nothing delights Siva more than to hear that a boy or girl has resolved to take the vow of celibacy and dedicate his or her life to God. This time it was Srimathi Kanti of Bareilly (daughter of Sri Kapur).

In a delighted mood, Siva began to instruct her:

Engage yourself heart and soul in the service of humanity. You have got all the talents: they are all the rarest gift of the Almighty. Utilise them all in His service. Take part in all women's movements. Only don't lose your head: don't allow yourself to be converted, but always endeavour to convert others and bring them to the divine path. Talk to the ladies. Deliver short stirring discourses on the importance of divine life, of righteousness, purity, truth and love. Serve them and win their hearts. Collect the children of your locality and lovingly tell them good illuminating stories and advise them on the essentials of perfect living.

Train the ladies and the children in easy Asanas and Pranayama. Break the cage: forget the sex. Atma is sexless There is infinite power within you. Be modest but be courageous. By all means, develop the feminine (motherly) heart that God has endowed you with: but be not a coward Stand up: hold before yourself the great ideals of Mira, Maitreyi, and Gargi. Contribute spiritual articles to ladies' magazines. Attend all ladies' meetings; and push yourself to the forefront and deliver lectures. Start with your own school. Informally talk to your own students on God and Divine Life. Create an interest in little girls. Talk to them of ethical culture and discipline. Gradually, the circle will become wider and wider. People will soon come to know of your divine nature and flock to you. Side by side, you should practise rigorous Sadhana and mould yourself. Then, every one will be compelled to listen to you. Keep always in touch with the leading women of the country and the world at large. Correspond with Sarojini Devi, Mira Behn Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and others outside India, Exchange of ideas is a healthy habit. You will soon become one of them."

ALL THIS IS DRAMA ONLY

A devotee from Sri Swami Sukdevanandaji's Ashram has come. He was known to Siva to be a good dramatist. At once, Siva asked that a copy of all the Dramas written by Siva be given to

him. With a visible profusion of gratitude, the devotee started perusing the books one by one, forgetting the Ashram, forgetting that he is sitting before Siva, forgetting everything, in fact (for he was seen admiring the book, smiling at some interesting passages in it, suddenly growing serious and serene at the impact of a sublime thought, etc., etc.)

It was quite a while before his attention was shifted from the books to the author.

You have written wonderful dramatic works, Swamiji.'

'Glory be to the Lord, the Prompter of all actions!' replied Siva in all humility.

'You have, Swamiji, given a new life to the histrionic art. Now people will know that even drama can be put to spiritual use. All the prejudices against the stage which grew in ignorant hearts will vanish.'

I have always felt that spiritual truths should be presented to the public in a form which they would appreciate most. If I find that many people go to a cinema, I will, at once, produce a play. If I find that people are interested only in storybooks, I will write philosophical stories. After all, what harm is there in enacting a drama? As a matter of fact, we are all, every day, enacting hundreds of scenes. The whole world is a big drama. Our real nature is something and our assumed nature is something diametrically opposite. This grand play teaches us innumerable lessons. Similarly, the plays will also impress the spiritual ideas on the people's minds.

After the devotee had left, Siva told us of Sri Swami Sukdevanandaji.

Sukdevanandaji is one of the oldest companions of Siva. And, in many respects, they are alike. S. has the same spirit of dynamic

activity which animates every nerve of Siva, He has done tremendous work through the Daivi Sampat Mandal. Wherever he goes, he holds conferences and does propaganda work. Another point of close resemblance between these two great spiritual giants is their absolute sincerity. They never mince words or matters. They go straight to the very core of the problem before them, decide on the adoption of a course, and with great zeal, earnestness and sincerity, achieve the object Their courage, and will-power are beyond description. Their devotion to the cause is beyond words. Sukdevanandaji's Guru Bhakti is supreme: in fact, all his achievements are attributed by him to the grace of his Guru, Sri Swami Ekarasanandaji Maharaj.

16th NOVEMBER, 1948

DEVOTION TO SIVA

Sri Mathur, General Manager of the Paramarth Bank, Rishikesh, was waiting for Siva near his Kutir early in the morning. Even while Siva was emerging from the Kutir, Sri Mathur fell prostrate at Siva's feet, on the bare ground. He placed a small amount (in silver coins) at Siva's feet, as 'flowers'.

'Swamiji Maharaj, today is my birthday. I have come to seek your blessings in order that I may stick to the path of righteousness and remember God.'

Siva blessed him and gave him his (Siva's) golden advice. Later Siva told us:

'Mathurji is a very pious and noble soul. He must have a lot of work to do. Yet, he is very regular in his Sadhana. Look at his devotion. He has come all the way from Rishikesh. He would have taken Sannyasa also. But, his family circumstances are such that he is, at present, unable to do so. Now he is practically leading a Sannyasin's life.'

DESTRUCTION OF PLEASURE-CENTRES (A BLESSING)

Srimathi Kanta Rani of Delhi, a young devotee with good spiritual Samskaras, who is staying here for the past few days, informed Siva that her father-in-law, a retired Engineer (Sri Shroff) had decided to build a Kutir in the Ashram premises and live here. They had planned to have the foundation-stone laid by Siva today.

It is an excellent idea. Only those who have spiritual Samskaras embedded in their very being will have such inclination. It is a rare ambition.

Do not imagine that you are not happy because you have lost your husband. It is all God's will; and as He is our own Father, all that He does is for our good only. Lord Krishna Himself says in the Bhagavatha that he removes the pleasure-centres of one whom He loves most. I will tell you a story: listen.

'Sri Krishna and Arjuna were once travelling through a town. They went to a rich man's house and asked for some food. This haughty man abused them in the vilest terms, refused to give them food and ran to beat them with a stick even. Arjuna almost lost his temper; but Krishna, realising this, wanted to quit the place. But, before doing so, He blessed the rich man with very much more riches, hundreds of cows, bungalows, etc. Arjuna thought this was queer behaviour; but kept quiet. Then they went to a poor man's house. He was an emaciated skeleton. But he had great devotion to the Lord. When the divine travellers approached him for food, he at once ran in, brought good milk (the only article of food he had in the house at that time), made Krishna and Arjuna (whom he did not recognise, as they were in disguise) sit on the cot and entertained them. 'Bhagavan, how blessed I am to have had your Darshan! You appear to be great devotees of the Lord. All this is yours only. Command me: what shall I do for

you?' The Lord understood His heart's spiritual yearning. He looked around. And, He found that the only property of the poor man was a cow. As they emerged from the house, Lord Krishna uttered a curse: May this cow die!' Arjuna was furious at this outrageous act on the part of the Lord Himself. What, you cursed the poor man who entertained us so nicely and blessed the haughty rogue who scolded us. What injustice! Krishna replied: 'My dear Arjuna, be calm. This poor man is a great devotee of mine: I love him, too.

The cow is the only object to which he is attached. The moment it is taken away, he will devote himself entirely to Me. He will soon attain Moksha. Whereas, the rich haughty man would find that his riches have suddenly increased. This will add to his egoism, to his bondages and to his worries.

Therefore, we should all rejoice when the pleasure-centres are removed. You are now free to do Sadhana all the twenty-four hours. Sri Shroff ji is also a good Sadhaka. He has retired from active public life. Why should he worry himself any more? He can also spend his last days peacefully on the banks of the Ganga in silent contemplation. Ekanta-Vasa is absolutely necessary from every point of view. Seclusion alone will give you everlasting peace and joy. Enough of friends, relatives! If you remain in Delhi, even if you are spiritually-inclined, there will be a lot of disturbance. Here, you can remain undisturbed."

When Srimathi Kanta Rani had left, Siva talked to us of retired people. They can devote their entire time to Sadhana: they should. How few of them do so! Sri Shroff is a good Sadhaka. He is also a mental Sannyasin: as Srimathi Kanta is a mental Sannyasini. (After a pause) Do you know of certain other mental Sannyasins? They will indulge in tall talk: they will discuss Vedanta and high philosophy: they will sing, dance and do Japa: but, you will soon come face to face with their hollowness when you approach them

with a request: 'Maharaj, you have got fifty thousand rupees, kindly donate one thousand rupees to the Ashram; it needs it.' They will not part with a single pie. This is a type of hypocritical mental Sannyasin.

'But Shroff is not like that. He builds this Kutir in the Ashram with the express purpose of letting the Society use the building whenever they are not using it.'

MOHAMED SHOULD GO TO MOUNTAIN

If mountain does not come to Mohamed, Mohamed should go to mountain.'

As soon as Siva came into the office, he enquired of Vishnuji: Vishnuji, did you go to Shroff's Kutir this morning to teach him Asanas?'

'Yes, Swamiji.'

That is good. Some of these old people might feel shy to practise Asanas in public. They will think 'Supposing I fall down while standing on Sirsasan, people will laugh', and so avoid coming to the Asana class. For such people's sake, you should go to their room and teach them Asanas. That is real spirit of service.

'Another important point. Do not simply come away after the Asana-practice is over. Do a few minutes' Japa and meditation: a couple of minutes' silent meditation: repeat Shanti Mantras, and then come away. Thus, even this Asana-class will be converted into a class on Yoga of Synthesis, with Japa, Dhyan, Kirtan, etc. The effects of such Asana-practice will be much more lasting.'

HUMOUR-THE SPICE OF LIFE

A little later, Siva's bag was suddenly found to glove his right hand: off came the hand with two bananas, and the bag dropped itself into a corner.

'Vishnuji, take these! These are not for you. You are a good Karma Yogi: therefore, you should not take them yourself, but give them to others. Give them right and left.... (meaning: one to Sri Sivapremji, sitting on the right, and the other to me, on the left).... But, don't give them right and left!'

SERMON ON THE BATTLE-FIELD

The rattling noise of the typewriters, beating the divine life-drums, produced a deafening noise. The pen in the hands of many youthful, energetic aspirants rushed along the body of registers, wrappers and letter-heads, spilling ink (the blood of divine life). Sannyasins, Brahmacharis and householder-devotees rushed to and fro carrying magazines and leaflets, the banner of divine life. Siva, the General, sat at the head of the office watching with satisfaction this battle against ignorance.

There entered into this field of Supreme Battle of Life, an engineer, a doctor and a layman, with two ladies and a child.

Besieged on all sides by the dark forces of materialism, they had resorted to Siva to help them fight their battles. Truly, it was like Arjuna resorting to Krishna in a moment of despair and desolation.

They were eager to find a solution to the problem that faces them: 'How to fight the inner battle?'

'Do Japa, Kirtan, Asanas, Pranayama. Get up at 4 a.m. Do Brahma Vichara. Study one chapter of the Gita daily. Observe Mouna for two hours. Fast on Ekadashi.

Siva virtually sang his song of twenty instructions.

'But when I say all this, you will be frightened; do Japa of the name of the Lord and remember Him always. This one thing is sufficient to take you to the Goal.

The mind always wants to run after sensual pleasures. Draw it back to the Lakshya-God. Fix it there. Then you will enjoy more peace, more joy and more strength. What is there in these pleasures? Any amount of worldly good fortunes and wealth will be of no avail. When the bank fails, your heart also will fail. When you are out of job, even your servant will not listen to your word. It is only when you are a big officer that people salute you. It will vanish when you lose the job or when you retire from the job. But, if you are a man of God, if you have acquired divine wealth or Daivi Sampath, you will be honoured and revered everywhere at all times. Acquire the Four Means to salvation. Vairagya, Viveka, Shad-Sampath and Mumukshutwa. Then take to the study of the Upanishads, Gita and Brahma Sutras.

"Stage by stage, you should evolve and know that happiness is not to be had in sensual objects. The greatest pleasure that man enjoys during the course of the day is in deep sleep. Is this not clear proof that pleasure lies outside the senses, outside the mind, outside the sense-objects? When discrimination dawns, and when you have real Vairagya, there will be a natural yearning to realise True Bliss of the Atman. Then you will take to spirituality and enjoy Atmic Bliss.

'Lead a pure virtuous life. Practise Satyam, Ahimsa and Brahmacharya. Sing the names of the Lord with intense devotion. This alone is sufficient. Keep your body in good health by the practice of Asanas and Pranayama. Spend your holidays in places of seclusion like Rishikesh and utilise the entire period in solid Sadhana. These are the preliminary aids to Divine Life. Then, by gradual stages, you will progress to the Supreme Abode. May God bless you! OM Namo Narayanaya.

Long after Siva had concluded his inspiring discourse, the party was in no mood to get up or go. This Sermon on the Battle-field apparently acted as a Brahmastra for them to slay all their inner

foes and threw a flood of light and joy into their hearts. In a dazed mood, they prostrated to Siva and thanked him profusely for this illumination.

'MY FRIENDS AND RELATIVE?'

The foundation-stone laying ceremony had been scheduled to be performed at 12 noon. So, Siva got up, collected his 'children' in the office, including the visitors and proceeded to the site. The blazing sun and the physical movement slowly brought down our visitors to the human plane.

"Swamiji, supposing we wish to stay here for some time, can we come with our family?' asked the engineer as we were nearing the Ashram archway.

'Of course, yes: do you think that we are without our families here? Why, this flower, this creeper, this delightful plant, this tall tree-all of them are my family-members. The whole world is pervaded by God, one Atman. Feel: feel, the entire world is your family only. Expand your consciousness and be free."

After such a struggle, they were able to ask him one mundane question: and expected Siva's reply also in the language of the earth. But, what a luck!

ALWAYS THE SAME

My Lord! What frail instruments you often choose for thy gigantic work. You take us by the hand and drag us, along. Yet, we act only as a burden to tire your tireless zeal, instead of taking you on our shoulders and running along under your direction.

Except for the solitary mason working at the site, Siva was the first to arrive. Again he started: Bring the Puja materials from the temple. Go and get the Prasad. Call Iyannaji. Tell Sri X that we are waiting here. Where is Sastriji? Who will do the Puja? etc'

What inexhaustible patience. Any other head of an institution would be fuming with rage.

One by one, they started coming. When Sri Shroff arrived, Siva took him up the hillock for an examination of the pit dug. 'Is this enough? Will it not be better to have it a little deeper?' Shroff was of the same opinion. At once the mason started on his work again. This could well have been done earlier.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Then began Kirtan, Chidananda Swamiji leading.

Today' commenced Siva, is the auspicious day of the full moon. Paurnami. It is a blessed day that reminds us of the nature of the Lord, Brahman or our own Self. Brahman is Paripoorna, fullness, infinite, Bhuman. It is not partial: it is One Homogeneous Existence, undivided, full. It is this that the full moon reminds us of. Other days represent the moon only as partial: only today the moon has all the sixteen Kalas. This is not the new moon (Amavasya) day of ignorance, inertia or Tamas. Today is the full moon day of light, joy and bliss.

'On this most auspicious day, we lay the foundation-stone of a Kutir for seclusion proposed to be built by Sri Shroff of Delhi. He is a retired engineer who wishes to live in seclusion in Rishikesh spending the rest of his life in divine contemplation, in the practice of Sadhana. He and Srimathi Kanta Rani, another exalted soul keenly interested in the acquisition of the inexhaustible wealth of the Lord's Name, of devotion to His Lotus Feet, of leading the divine life intend to practise Tapascharya at this holy spot, and to attain the goal of life.

This goal of life is God-realisation. Nothing else is of any use. Man is lost in the glamour of material pleasures. Sensual enjoyment cannot give lasting happiness. Even if you have a

dozen bungalows, twenty motor-cars, a few crores of rupees in your bank, and an army of servants: even if you have a beautiful wife and many children, even if you have all the material pleasures that the world can offer you, you cannot have that supreme peace that can come only out of Self-realisation. In the Self alone is there deep abiding peace. Do not be duped by these sensual objects. When the bank fails, you will weep. More wealth, more worry. With the fulfilment of your desires, they multiply: you can never root them out by feeding them. Unless you are desireless, you can never have peace.

'Himalayas represent the Swarupa of the Lord. Sthavaranam Himalayah': 'I am the Himalayas among the immovables'. Gaze at this gigantic manifestation of the Lord. Again, 'Srothasamasmi Jahnavi': 'I am Ganges among streams'. What more do you want? The Himalayas are our father and the Ganga is our mother. It is a great blessing to live at the feet of Himalayas and to take bath in the Ganga. It is in the Himalayas that great saints and sages have practised Tapas from time immemorial and realised God. The holy vibrations of these Self-realised sages are ever present in the very atmosphere of these parts.

'Sri Shroff and Srimathi Kanta are indeed blessed souls. They have resolved rightly. They have understood the vanity of the world. Their examples should open the eyes of others. Now-a-days, even retired people cling to their families and relatives: they are attached to property and wealth: they are greedy and want to enter into private service somewhere or other to earn some more money. Even after suffering all their life in this Samsara, they have not realised the gravity of the situation, they have not realised the importance of the life divine. Every retired man should follow Sri Shroff's example and actually retire into seclusion. That is why, our ancients instituted the Vanaprasthashrama. Without attachment to property, to son, wife

or wealth, the man is asked to retire into a forest to practise Tapas, to practise Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana and ultimately to embrace Sannyasa and realise the summum bonum of human life. Renunciation is absolutely essential. Without renunciation of material pleasures, of egoism and of selfishness, nothing great has ever been achieved.

'May God bless Sri Shroff and Srimathi Kanta with health, long life, peace, prosperity and Kaivalya! May the Lord illumine their hearts! May God bless you all! May you all attain God-realisation in this very birth! May you all shine as Jivanmuktas in this very birth! OM.'

Siva was all the time standing on the hillock and the flock below (on the path leading to the Viswanath Mandir) listened spell-bound to this Sermon on the Mount from the lips of the modern Jesus Christ. Wave after wave of spiritual fervour swept over the entire audience as the powerful vibrations of Siva's soul-stirring oration pierced their heart. With hairs on end, we stood, oblivious of the surroundings, listening to the words of the great master, with our eyes rivetted on his magnificent form, until we instinctively cried Jai' at the conclusion of the Sermon.

At the close of the function, we were all coming down.

The visitor-friends were also coming down with Siva.

You take your food here: and then you can go,' invited Siva.

'Swamiji, we have not yet taken our bath. And, we have already brought some food with us in the car.'

'Do not worry about oath. Repeat Jnanamritam Suddham Atindriyoham. This is Vedantic Snanam. This is superior to all other baths. Mentally imagine that you are taking bath in the Great ocean of Supreme Knowledge. Identify yourself with with this ocean of knowledge- Jnanamritam. Realise that you Realise

that you are the ever-pure Atman-Suddham. And, feel that you are beyond the senses-Atindriya. You will feel completely refreshed. You will feel that you are entirely different! Come, then: repeat this thrice and take some food as Prasad.'

For once, they must have thought, Siva came down to human plane: but it would not last longer than to ask one question. Lucky visitors! God bless you!

BIRDS OF A FEATHER FLOCK TOGETHER

As we had almost reached the D.J. Hall, Siva turned and looked behind. Sri Balan and Sri Chetlur were coming together.

Smilingly Siva remarked: Birds of a feather flock together. A journalist always seeks a journalist's friend-ship. An advocate likes the company of another advocate, a cook that of a cook, a doctor that of a doctor: a bald-headed man goes with another bald-headed man: a Sannyasi likes the company of another Sannyasi. That is the law of nature. But, a Jivanmukta finds his own Self in every one and in everything and therefore moves with everyone without distinction.'

17th NOVEMBER, 1948

SIVA IN EVERY NOOK AND CORNER

Swami Brahmanandaji, an aged Sadhu, came to the Ashram for a day's stay.

Siva nicely entertained him with fruits and milk, gave him the magazine and leaflets and attended to the Swami's comforts.

'Swamiji,' said Swami B., I had been to Ceylon. I have wandered about in the interior of far-off Ceylon. Put, I was surprised to find that you have your disciples in that country also. I saw a devotee in the countryside of Ceylon and he said that he has been one of your silent admirers and disciples for a considerable time past."

Vishnuji took the visiting Sadhu to the temple, Guha, etc. When he returned, Swami B. told Siva: 'Swamiji, from the road I thought that the hillock grew, on it only jungles. But what a fine Ashram you have built over it! It is a miracle and a great revelation when one goes up the hillock.

NOT YET CONFIRMED

Sri Ram Ram Ram of Lucknow is an aged devotee. Even in his advanced age, he is reluctant to give up his practice as an advocate. He has, however, been a pious devotee who has regularly visited Rishikesh and attended Satsang on every occasion. Siva sounded him: 'Why not retire from active life and practise contemplation? You have worked enough: you have no encumbrances.'

But, Swamiji, though I have attended Satsang all these years and though I have been doing Japa and Dhyana all these years, I have not yet a confirmed belief in God and His name. There is yet Moha for family, for position, for money and for worldly life. It is strange, Swamiji, I confess."

Maya is powerful," said Siva: 'and, except in very rare cases where the Samskaras are very strong, taste for a life of contemplation does not manifest itself in man. No doubt, Satsang, Japa and Dhyana help a Sadhaka a lot. But the Avarana of Avidya or the veil of ignorance is so thick that these are not sufficient to pierce it. They only create Samskaras which take shape in future births. But, if at the same time you do Vichara, develop Viveka and cultivate Vairagya, then the progress 's extremely rapid. Vairagya and Viveka are absolutely necessary. Without these, no amount of Satsang, Japa, or Dhyana will produce immediate results. Maya is extremely powerful: she can be annihilated only through Dridha Vairagya (intense dispassion).'

18th NOVEMBER, 1948

NO WARM RECEPTION

Swami.... who had once stayed at the Ashram for a considerable time and who had done a lot of work for the Society, had come and gone away. There was a mild discussion about his attitude towards the Ashram.

'Swamiji, perhaps he did not stay on at the Ashram because he was not given a rousing reception he might have expected.'

"What reception? A Sannyasin should not have such expectations and desires."

THE ACID TEST

'He left the Ashram to do intense Tapasya and Sadhana. If he had really done much Tapasya or Sadhana, he would have developed the loving heart, an entirely changed angle of vision, and this would have electrified whomever he met here.

He would have adopted an attitude of humility, of service, of brotherly love towards everyone here. He would thus have endeared himself to everyone. Naturally, a different atmosphere would have been created. That is the way. He should always conquer people's hearts through love and service. There is no other way. If he was not able to do that, it means the Sadhana was a continuous indulgence in inertia and an increased fattening of the ego."

Good lesson we ourselves learnt today. What more precious lessons can Tapasya teach us? Better to serve selflessly and egolessly than to add to our egoism by other means.

SHIP OF LIFE

We should much rather surrender ourselves at Siva's feet and let him carry the burden. It is possible by progressively opening up the Antahkarana to Siva's daily teachings and actions to imbibe

his divinity: when the fire of Siva-Sankalpa has burnt our ignorance, the flame of knowledge will get lighted and burn brilliantly illumining every nook and corner of our being.

Strangely enough, the same thoughts have found expression in a letter which we received just today from Srimathi Sivaramaseetha Bai of Tuticorin:

There are three types of Jnanis,' she says. There are the Muktha Purushas who are like the small pieces of wood that float on the surface of a river. They can float, but they cannot bear the burden of even one small bird. If the bird sits on this piece of wood, the wood will sink. Then, there are the Nityas. Like a country boat, these Jnanis will take along with them beyond the ocean of Samsara a small band of devotees. Then there are the Avatara Purushas. They are like huge steamers. Without the least effort, as though playfully, they can carry over their shoulders thousands of Jivas with all their burdens, their bag and baggage (viz., their sins and Samskaras), and take them to the other shore of immortality or God-realisation. You are like the great ocean-going liner: you belong to the third class of Jnanis-the Avatara Purushas', says she addressing Siva. She has given another beautiful description: 'Muktas are like a small lantern placed in a room. This is not of any use to those outside. Nityas are like the street lights. They illumine a whole street. But Avatara Purushas are like the sun. They illumine the entire universe. Like the sun, the Avatara Purusha helps the entire world. You belong to this class of Jnanis. I rejoice when I hear of your glory and service: the glory and service of a true spiritual sun. I rejoice that South India has been thrice blessed in giving birth to an Avatara Purusha like you.'

Well done. You have diagnosed the Doctor of the Soul himself accurately-That is what we should say to Sri Sivaramaseetha Bai.

LESSON IN BEGGING

Sri Swami Muruganandaji wants to lead a life of seclusion and Tapasya. He came to the office to take leave of Siva.

'Swamiji, I intend to go to Andhra Ashram and stay there for some time. Then I shall find out a suitable place for myself.'

But, wherever you go, you should make yourself useful. Then only will people like you. Merely taking Bhiksha and sitting idly somewhere is not Yoga. That is Tamasic indulgence. Not only will people not like you, but your own progress will be slow. Combine meditation with service. Then everyone will like you and your progress will also be quick.

'All right: you can remain wherever you like. Take Bhiksha from the Kshetra. But, you should know the method! Come: I will show you how. Sit here. Now, you are the kitchen manager who distributes the food. You should make a nice bag of your cloth like this. Then hang it on your forearm like this. Go to the man who gives roties. Receive the roties gracefully bending your body, like this. Then catch hold of the loose ends of the cloth with the left hand itself (do not place the improvised bag on the floor) and, with the right hand, take the dhal in the vessel. Then go to the vegetable-walah: take the vegetables and walk off." Siva demonstrated the entire process: made M. also do so.

'Swamiji, the main difficulty for me is that I do not know the language and there are no people here whom I know or who know me. Therefore, I intend to go to South India.'

'What is this? A Sannyasin should, always remain in a place where he is least known. That is the secret behind the Parivrajak life also. Familiarity not only breeds contempt in some quarters, but Moha in others, too. That is very bad. Always remain unknown, a stranger wherever you go. That is the gate to Moksha. And, serve at every opportunity that you get. OM Namah Sivaya.'

M. left. Ultimately for his own South India.

RUB EVERYWHERE: SMALL OR BIG

A Chettiar from the South was describing the affairs of a well-known Ashram. There are parties and cliques: power-politics with national politics thrown in. Provincialism, caste distinctions: distinctions between high and low.

Siva remarked in jest, though with deep significance: 'Everywhere there is rub. Only in some places, it is a small rub: in others, it is big rub. World is a place of rubs only.

And, which Ashram or locality is 'out' of the world? The ideal Ashram is a place where there is the least rub!'

ALWAYS SING ANANDOHAM

Sri Aravamudan had a pricking conscience: he had told an unpremeditated lie, without realising its consequences. And, peculiarly (as it often happens with Siva) events so contrived themselves that it was exposed, though the consequences were not serious, again thanks to the presence of Siva. With a contrite heart, A. had written a note apologising for the mistake and left it on Siva's table.

On seeing (at first sight), Siva exclaimed: 'What? Aravamudan is leaving the Ashram?'

'No, Swamiji, he has only left a note.' 'Achcha. About that incident?' Siva threw the note down without reading it further. 'Whenever someone unusually places a note on my table or prostrates, I take it to be an indication of 'OM Namo Narayanaya, I am going to Uttarkashi.' (To A.) Don't worry. These slips do occur in a man's life. Learn the lesson: profit by it: then, forget the whole event. Always sing Anandoham: never 'worryoham'.

A WEEK WITH SIVA

Sri Lakshmi Narayan Chetlur from Geneva had stayed for a week at the Ashram and intended to leave for Geneva tomorrow. He delivered a short talk in the Bhajan Hall on the benefit he had derived, from his stay for a week at the Ashram. I give below some points from his lecture:

Four and a half years ago, I happened to see on my father's table a few works of Swamiji and also a spiritual diary. I tried to study the books and also to maintain the spiritual diary. The keeping of the diary was at that time rather a difficult job. Later I went to Europe. There I felt that I should have a more thorough knowledge of Yoga and should be in a position to take Eastern culture into the West. This time when I came to India, I wanted to utilise this short visit in the acquisition of this knowledge. Therefore I came to the Ashram. Have I been benefited in my quest?

Yes: as a result of my stay here for a week, the meaning of life has become infinitely clearer to me. I have often been drawn out of my self-imposed seclusion and taught the principles of Yoga. I find in the Ashram a congenial atmosphere in which every one works in a spirit of brotherly love. I find, too, that the moment one enters the Ashram, one forgets all about caste, creed, colour and nationality. I find one family from California, a couple of Sadhakas from Africa, all mixing freely together, as though they are all members of one fraternity. Unsolicited, the Ashramites go out of their way, greet me and help me in solving my problems. That is something which marks this Ashram out from others.

'I leave with a definite feeling that I have been benefited in the moral fabric of my being."

Later, Siva gave him invaluable instructions in regard to his propaganda work in the West, and encouraged him in his

endeavours to spiritualise the Indian Association in Geneva of which he is the Secretary.

There is no harm in having a materialistic department in the organisation. You need finance to run the Association. You need to attract people to the cause. I will tell you a secret. Open a small restaurant with the help of an Indian cook. The dosai there will attract a large clientele. You will be financially benefited: and you will get a large membership for the Association, too. You can then introduce them into Yoga and work wonders. All these are necessary in the present age.'

Then Sri R. V. Sastri explained how many immoral people had been turned to the divine path by Siva contributing articles to very low-class trash journals.

'People first purchase the journal to read the trash stories. Later, they find in it one page of matter which is absolutely the opposite of the matter contained in the others. There comes a moment in the life of every man, a hit somewhere, a knock somewhere, when he turns to God. This one-page catches fire in his heart at that psychological moment: he turns away from the rubbish and buys the magazine only for this one page. It goes to such an extent that he cuts the page away from the ugly matter of the magazine and then reads.'

That is the secret. Siva will find out the worldly man's weak-points, and seemingly try to feed him there, but inwardly draw him to Divine Life. This is what Lord Krishna was doing: an art in which He, too, was an adept.

19th NOVEMBER, 1948

CHILD MAKES THE AGED CHILDREN

Sri S.Y. Krishnaswami, I.C.S., and his wife have come again from Delhi. Siva met them after they had finished their night-meal: in the Dining Hall.

'Have you had your meal?'

Yes, Swamiji. Last time we came here, we had a great desire to attend the evening Bhajan: but we could not. So, today we have come with the express intention of attending the Bhajan. When we returned to Delhi, we were always thinking of the calm and serene atmosphere of Rishikesh. It is only your Ashirvad that has brought us back here.'

Very good. There is, I think, not one better place in the whole world, than Rishikesh. You must settle down here. What is job, money, family, wealth, position? Peace you can get only in this sort of life.'

I entirely agree with you, Swamiji. I have enjoyed all the comforts and joys that worldly life has to offer man. I have travelled all over the world. First I went to America through the Western route. The second time I went through the East. I have stayed in the very best hotel in America paying thirty-five dollars a day. I have presided over international conferences. But, nothing like spending even one evening here, sharing the simple food, leading the simple life, sleeping in a simple cottage.

In the Bhajan Hall, Siva prompted Sri Krishnaswami to sing. And, in the magnetic aura of this child-like Siva, K. forgetting the urban life he was accustomed to, and sang a couple of stanzas from Ananda Lahari, beautifully and with Bhava. Siva greatly appreciated the songs.

Old Satchidanandaji also sang. It was a thrilling Satsang gathering. All old men become like children in the presence of this utterly simple child Siva!

27th NOVEMBER, 1948

TAGORE OF SOUTH INDIA SINGS SIVA'S GLORY

At the Bhajan Hall, during the evening Satsang, Sri K.S. Venkataramani of Kaveripoompattinam, a great author of repute, whose famous stories and novels had earned for him the title of Tagore of South India' spoke. Even before he commenced, the tender Siva, in maternal affection, had requested Sri K.S.V.-

'If your health permits, you may speak a few words: otherwise, please, do not strain yourself.' Such is Siva's natural concern for others.

Sri K.S.V. spoke of his great admiration for the Nama-Prachara that Siva has been carrying on in the country, and particularly for the fact that the Akhanda Maha Mantra Kirtan was going on in the Ashram. 'An infinite power is generated where this Mantra is repeated and that works out for the good of the individuals concerned and of the world at large. I have just visited the famous Samadhi of Bodhendra Swami, the great exponent of Nama-Sankirtanam: and I am very happy to find here another great Swamiji carrying on the same tradition. If devotion to the Lord and His name is today kept up in the human heart, it is due to the herculean endeavours of Swami Sivanandaji."

28th NOVEMBER, 1948

INITIATION INTO ASANOLOGY

Sri K.S. Venkataramani is leaving for Delhi today. He was in the Sivananda Publication League section purchasing some of the Ayurvedic Pharmacy products books, etc.

'Venkataramaniji, I wanted to teach you some Asanas and Kriyas before you go. So saying, Siva got out of his seat and met Sri K.S.V. half-way. And, unceremoniously Siva sat on the ground

where he thought fit! Then he started demonstrating Asanas to the astonishment of Sri K.S.V. and Sri R.V. Sastriji.

This is Uddiyana Bandha. Pumping it quickly, it becomes Agnisara kriya. These two act as natural insulin. The pancreatic secretion is increased. This is Maha Mudra. Just bend and try to touch the knee with your nose. It is not necessary that you should actually do so-a mere effort is sufficient. And, this is Paschimottanasana. These are all natural treatments for diabetes. You can do them just for a few minutes every day."

With profound gratitude, K.S.V. said: 'Swamiji, what wonderful Kriyas these are! What a wonderful spiritual heritage we have, which we do not know. The pity is that the average man today is not aware of the very existence of these Asanas, Kriyas and so on. But for you, they would have been altogether forgotten. Indeed, in this respect, I must say, you have rendered a service which no one else has done."

MODERATION IS SATTVIC FOOD

Then Sri K.S.V. wanted to know if Brahmi-Buti would be of use to him.

'Yes, it is very good. Soak almonds in water overnight: peel them: make them into a paste along with Brahmi Buti in the morning. Prepare a sherbat and take it, say, after your morning coffee.'

'Swamiji, I thought of it only as a substitute to coffee which I want to give up altogether.

'No, no. You need not give it up. It is necessary for brain-workers like you. The prohibition is only for the sake of those who drink gallons of coffee every day. Always observe strict moderation in diet. Then, whatever food you take becomes Sattvic'

SIVA TRIES A SANDAL ON

I watched Siva coming through the window of the office. I thought: 'Why is he walking so slowly, almost limping?' Siva's gait is always majestic (even if he is not well) and his pace fast. Siva noticed my curiosity.

'In all these sixty-two years, I have not worn these!' He pointed to the sandals (chappals) he was wearing. My shoes started pinching and I noticed small eruptions on my feet. So, I am trying these on. But, being unaccustomed to it, I feel a strange uneasiness. I feel as though the sandals would slip off. I have to grip them tightly with my toes.

'Man is born with nothing in this world. The child gets a toy: and grips it tightly, lest it should lose the toy. The boy gets a chocolate, and holds it tightly. The man grips tightly to himself, wife, children, property, position, prestige, etc., lest he should lose them. These are the glamorous objects that allure the human being. Once he throws them away and rests in his own Swarupa, he is at peace.

DECEMBER, 1948

1st DECEMBER, 1948

TAPO BHUMI

Sri Lakshminarayana Sastrigal and his sister came into the office and bowed to Siva. After enquiring about their health, etc., and whether they had taken their morning coffee and tiffin, Siva said:

Take your bath in hot water. It is rather cold today and cloudy, too.'

Smilingly, Sri Lakshmi Ammal said: 'Swamiji, should we take hot water bath on the very bank of the Ganga? But, the water of the Ganga is really very cold: otherwise, we would have taken our bath earlier in the morning as we usually do in the South.'

That is different. Uttara Khand is Tapo Bhumi. The Achara of the south does not apply to those who live here. The very life here is Tapas and soul-purifying. The very atmosphere bathes us continually in a spiritual Jnana Ganga.' (after a pause, Siva added half in humour) 'Do you know? When Suka Deva was roaming about in the Himalayan forests, he did not even clean his teeth. He purchased a packet of tooth powder only when he reached Delhi.'

Side-splitting laughter was the result of this humourous remark full of sublime import.

SANNYASIN IS NOT HUMAN BEING?

In the evening, after the Kirtan, Siva took Srimathi Lakshmi Ammal round to the Library, to the stock-room of books, to the Yoga Museum, to the Yajnashala and the photographic dark room. Padmanabhanji was showing them the photo-printing process. When this inspection was over and we were about to leave the dark room, Siva said:

'What has a Sannyasin got to do with photography? What use has he for photographs?'

We turned to Siva himself for an answer.

After a few moments, Siva added: That way people will start asking: 'What has a Sannyasin to do with food? With clothing?' Is not a Sannyasin a human being? Everyone's body and bodily needs are the same and all that the householder needs and does, the Sannyasin, too, needs and does. Only the attitude is entirely different."

2nd DECEMBER, 1948

WHO ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

The Judge Saheb (Sri Yogi Gauri Prasadji of Swarg Ashram) has come, on a sort of official visit to advise the Society on certain legal matters. After he had finished the discussions, he was talking to us about certain legal peculiarities, concerning the copyright on books.

'You see, I have got most of your books, Swamiji," commenced Judge Saheb and was drawn away from the main theme of his talk. 'And, I am trying to build up a good library of your books. They are so valuable, you know, that I intend leaving them to my children by a special will. I know that the children will cherish them as the richest treasure left by me. Swamiji, you have explained in these books in a language that is unrivalled for its simple grandeur what others have taken great pains to attempt to present in their bombastic language. Even a layman or a college student can just pick up your books and solve all his problems. That is what no one else can do: and I think that it is only due to your own personal realisation of the Supreme Truth that this direct simplicity characterises your books.

'Another peculiar thing I tell you. I refer to your books every now and then to confirm my own opinions. You see:

after I discuss a problem with someone else and after offering my own opinion on it, I take up your works and find that that opinion has your weighty authority behind it. These books are something like the Vedas and the Upanishads for me. As the Yogis and Siddhas of yore verified their experiences from the Sruti, I feel that when I find the same view is expressed by you also, I must be right.'

All the time, Siva sat there without a trace of any sort of emotion, deep like the unfathomable ocean, as though to ask:

Who are you talking about?"

11th DECEMBER, 1948

THE ANCIENT PROCESS

The morning university class was just over.

'Atmaramji,' called out Siva, 'are you taking notes of these lectures?'

'No, Swamiji.

'You see: that is a mistake. Gaining knowledge is not such an easy thing. Just imagine: how many wonderful points are given out by Chidananda Swamiji, Sivanarayanaji and others. The Rishis have prescribed the three-fold process of Sravana Manana Nidhidhyasana for the gaining of knowledge. If you do Sravana for one minute, you should do Manana of the same topic for ten minutes: then Nidhidhyasana for one hundred minutes. Then these ideas will become your own. Merely nodding to these talks will be of no use. Further, when you develop the habit of recording the thoughts that are given out here, you will also begin

to listen most attentively to the talks. Otherwise, the tendency will be to doze off during the lectures.

'Even today I am a student. I carefully listen to the lectures delivered here, then go to my room, think over the matter, and write articles.

Then turning to others, Siva said: 'Atmaramji, too, will deliver lectures in the morning class. Did you see his wonderful performance the other day-the doctor's parade? Full of humour: it produced side-splitting laughter. He has a brilliant intellect: and he is full of zeal and steady application to the work he undertakes.

BE THOU LIKE ME

'Everyone should be trained to lecture. Kesavji will talk hereafter on Vedanta. Vishnuji will talk on Asanas and Hatha Yoga. Everyone here has all the faculties hidden within. You should all try to bring out those talents and develop them. In this Ashram, you have the fullest scope for that.

CHARTER FOR PARIVRAJAKACHARY

'Balan Swamiji, you should have a comprehensive understanding of all the Yogas. When you go out after Sivaratri on your first attempt at the life of a Parivrajaka, even though you may not do any positive propaganda, you cannot avoid people coming to you and asking you various questions. 'Swamiji,' someone will say, 'Give me Upadesha on Bhakti.' Another will need a little talking-to on Vedanta. Some other man will be fond of the Upanishads. You cannot avoid these personal talks. And, even these are as important as lectures on the platform. You will be in charge of all the sections of the university hereafter till you leave on the great pilgrimage. Just half an hour talks! Read some books: sit and think about the subject for ten minutes, jot down points and deliver lectures. It is very easy.

'Kesavji, Vishnuji, Dasarathji,-all should be trained in lecturing. When you deliver a lecture, every word should be clearly audible. The tone should be clear, bold and effective. Everyone should hear every word. Then alone will it create an indelible impression on the hearers.

You can get by heart some of the English songs in my book Inspiring Songs' also. See how various ideas are combined in one song in the Hare Rama tune. Even if you do not deliver lectures, if you sing this one song, people will be thrilled. Study Gita, Upanishads, Bhagavata, Brahma Sutras, Ramayana, and assimilate the ideas contained in them. You should become master of all these.

THE RAZOR PATH

'God-realisation is not such an easy job. These help-Swadhyaya, Sravana, Manana etc., are only intended to show us the way. When you have a keen longing for liberation, you will learn from the scriptures and from the lectures delivered by Chidananda Swamiji and others here how you should proceed.

'All the time you should be vigilant and watchful. You should learn from everyone the lessons of divine life. Merely sitting in a corner and practising Yogic Kriyas will not help you. What power do you wish to acquire? What is it to you if you gain the power to create a new world or to arrest the course of the sun and the moon? Siddhis and Riddhis will only fatten your egoism, and you will be farther removed from God. Do not run after them.

'On the other hand, consider yourself a blade of grass. Develop humility, patience, perseverance, forbearance, love, truthfulness and purity.

'I have never longed after Moksha. I have never aspired for God-realisation. I shall go on serving everyone. I shall go on purifying

my heart through selfless service. I shall always try to see God in everyone. God Himself should take pity on me and give me Mukthi. Otherwise, I shall take birth again and again and go on serving, till God Himself voluntarily offers me Mukthi.

Look at Sri Sthanu Subramanyam. See, how wonderfully he has trained his heart. He has come to stay here for a few days. But, with him, he has brought a box of medicines. He runs here and there to serve the sick. Examine your heart: have you got this one quality? Does your heart melt at the suffering of others? He does his Japa and Nitya Anushthana regularly here. Have you got that tenacious adherence to the path?

'I want all of you to become dynamic Yogis. Here, you will get the greatest scope for the fullest development. People, who have had training here, have opened new Ashrams and Societies. Just think what a wonderful thing it would have been if all those dynamic workers had remained here itself and worked to expand this institution! Yet, it is a good thing that they are all doing wonderful work in their own way.

'One who organises an institution should have perfect tolerance, understanding, adaptability, humility and dedication. Some of the Mahants will drive away a young recruit if they feel that the young recruit has more talents and will one day shine superior to the Mahants themselves. This is very bad. What do you care if a new-comer is greater than yourself? You should try to win his heart, make him also dedicate himself to the cause and thus try to utilise his services to this great cause. That is the real spirit of an organiser. If you have such dedication, even if this new-comer, out of malice, drives you away, you will take Bhiksha from the Kshetra and work for the cause. You should always work to make everyone equal, if not better than yourself. Never suppress another: never ignore another's talents. I want everyone to come to the Ashram: a scavenger, an artist, a journalist, a songster, a

poet, an orator. I shall give them the fullest scope to develop their talents on the right lines. I shall serve them and win their heart. I shall give them the longest rope. If they have mischief in their heart and if they want to do evil to the institution, God will protect the institution.

'I am not bothered about the institution. My nature is to work. My goal is to serve. This service has been in me from my very childhood. Even if this organisation collapses, I shall sit in a hut, serve some patients, print some leaflets and serve humanity.

'Study the Gita. Find out how many divine virtues that the Lord has enumerated there, you have developed. Purify the heart. Serve, serve and serve. Meditation will come by itself. Samadhi will come by itself. Do not hanker after powers, Siddhis and Riddhis. They are all hindrances in the spiritual path. See God in every face. This is the essence of the teachings of all the Vedas."

12th DECEMBER, 1948

THE MAHANT SIVA

Kesavji delivered his first discourse on Vedanta. Vishnuji analysed the importance of Hatha Yoga. Sivanarayanji was eloquent in his exposition of the Gita. All during the morning class.

At the end, Siva was visibly delighted at the performance of the budding lecturers. 'Simply grand!' was his only comment. They felt greatly encouraged and enthused.

He thus demonstrated what he had said earlier-that his greatest joy is when he sees that his disciples shine gloriously.

CHARITY IN DISGUISE

Sri R.P. Gandhi, a worker in Government employ, came into the office, bowed to Siva and narrated his tale of woe. He is a refugee

from the Punjab. He had lost everything in the riots; and he had recently received intimation from his bankers that his bank, too, had completely failed. His sisters were sick: and the whole family had, owing to the shock, poor health.

'Swamiji, I have some good religious books. I wish to dispose them of as I am not able to make both ends meet with the salary I am getting. I wonder if you will purchase some of these books.' He showed the list which totalled Rs. 68.12.

Siva scanned the list: but I found his eyes straying elsewhere. He was deeply immersed in thought.

He read out the names of the books. Most of them were either in the Ashram library or were unnecessary.

'Does not matter,' he said to me. 'Select some good books out of this list for half the amount. Premanandaji, get Rs. 40. Rs. 30 we shall give him as the price of the books. And, Rs. 10 as my my humble offering....Yes, merely purchasing books is not charity. I should also give him some money as a donation.'

When the money came, Siva handed it to him with reverence and regard: 'Patram Pushpam!'

It is not a gift or charity, but it is worship of the Lord, the flowers being the currency-notes.

Where it is a matter of help, Siva finds his joy. And, he adopts strange ways to carry out his heart's desire to serve and to help.

An incident which occurred a few years ago comes to mind.

Siva was going to the Swarg Ashram with a party. On his way, he met a Sadhu who was fond of sweetmeats. Nearby was sitting a sweetmeat vendor, a very poor man, who subsists on these sales. Siva quickly perceived his chance. He took out some money,

purchased the sweetmeats and gave them to the Sadhu: thus he had helped both of them in a strange way.

COAT OF ARMS

Devotees of the Lord are familiar with 'Kavachas' of Stotras invoking the Lord's protection. Every Kavacha ends with a Phala-sruti: 'He who repeats this morning and evening will be free from diseases etc.'

Siva has worn a wonderful Kavacha on him. The moment he sits on his chair in the office (and this I noticed only today), he quickly gazes at the various pictures of Gods and Goddesses hung on the wall around him-Vishnu, Venkatesa, Saraswati, Lord Krishna, Siva, etc. Try this once. You will at once be inspired with glowing spiritual thoughts, divine energy and potency. A great secret worth careful note by every Sadhaka. To Siva (as it is to most of us), the pictures hung on the walls are not mere decorations. But, they are realities to him who are there ever watching over him, inspiring him from within, guiding him and protecting him.

Now I understand why and how he pulled up an inmate for changing the place of the picture of Saraswati. Ordinarily, we would never have noticed if such a change takes place in our rooms or houses.

13th DECEMBER, 1948

FUMES OF PROSPERITY

What a miracle!

Yesterday and today, the Ashram witnesed a continuous series of Havans. Lord Viswanath was surrounded on all sides by sacred fires around which were seated pious souls offering oblations into the sacred fire with the repetition of Mantras.

Yesterday, on one side, there was Gita Havan, for it was Gita Jayanthi, the day on which Bhagavad Gita was revealed to humanity. On another side was going on the grand Gayatri Havan with fifteen Brahmins sitting round the fire offering oblations to the repetition of the Gayatri Mantra.

The Gita Havan was performed by the Ashram, for the welfare of the whole world, and for the spiritual illumination of the entire humanity.

Gayatri Havan was arranged on behalf of a pious devotee.

Today there was a unique Havan in connection with the Ati Rudra Yajna. This Yajna in Kali Yuga is comparable to the Aswamedha Yajna in the previous Yugas. It entails enormous expense. It is only due to Siva's divine presence and grace that the Ashram has been able to undertake to perform this Yajna. Otherwise, it is difficult even for Rajahs and Maharajahs.

14th DECEMBER, 1948

GLORY OF MANUAL LABOUR

Siva's eyes on his entrance into the office in the morning fell on the few banana peals lying in a corner.

'Nowadays, no one sweeps the office in the morning. All enthusiasm has faded away, I think."

'Last Sunday, I swept Swamiji.'

'Day before yesterday was my turn.

Siva listened as a school-master listens to the lame excuses of children who had forgotten to do home-work.

'If there is a genuine interest in keeping the office clean in you all, then even the thought of 'my turn' and 'his turn' would not arise.

'Vji may be busy with letters. But, then, at least the junior inmates ought to take this work upon them. I am not saying because the others are senior: but they may feel that they may be able to do more intellectual work in that period.

'Manual work is very essential. It will keep your body healthy. It will provide you with a spirit of service. You will be able to develop humility, forbearance and other divine virtues. Cleanliness is next to Godliness. You should take delight in such Seva. There should be no compulsion from outside, nor should you do it, just because someone else is asking you to do.'

15th December, 1948

The Avadhuta Swamiji is seriously ill. Sri Rajagopalji and Chidanandaji are in constant attendance: through their efforts and by the grace of Siva, the old Swamiji had actually been rescued from the jaws of death two days ago.

Siva was at Avadhuta Swamiji's bedside, affectionately enquiring about his health.

Govindaswamiji who had a malarial attack came to the spot.

'How are you?'

'Swamiji, he had high fever in the afternoon,' explained Chidanandaji.

Siva noticed Govindaswamiji's unshaven face. I think a good shave is urgently necessary. It will relieve him of half the feverish appearance. I always believe that a neat and clean appearance goes a long way in the curing of a disease.'

'Swamiji, I thought it would be nice to clip Avadhuta Swamiji's beard also a bit. Because, now he is greatly inconvenienced while taking milk or coffee on account of the beard.'

'No, no. We should take Sendamangalam Swamiji's permission before doing So. (Sendamangalam Swayamprakasha Swamiji is the Avadhuta Swamiji's Guru.) Without his Guru's permission, you cannot cut his hair.'

This, in spite of the fact that the old Swami had made Ananda Kutir his abode, and had Guru-like veneration towards Siva. Siva would help, lodge, feed and maintain a Sadhu, but not claim his allegiance.

17th DECEMBER, 1948

THE END OF EVIL

Certain principles of Divine Life Society's organisation were being discussed.

'My ideal is service,' said Siva. 'I will, therefore, keep the doors of the Ashram open even to a rogue. I will take him in and try to mould his character on right lines. Through him, I will serve humanity. In this service, his heart also will get purified.

I do not want to lose one worker. For, you see: this Ashram and Society started like a small mustard seed, and by God's grace, it has grown into a big institution now with branches all over the world. Thousands of aspirants are writing that they are benefited by our service.'

Sri R.V. Sastriji interrupted: Yes, Swamiji. That is perfectly true. Sri Satchidananda Swamiji wrote to the All-India Congress Committee for a pass to join the Congress Session. The letter reached Sri Rajendra Prasad for sanction. Sri Rajen Babu noticed the name 'Sivanandashram' on top of the letter and at once remarked: 'Oh, this Swami has written from Sivanandashram. They are doing very good work. There is no worry. Issue him a ticket. Sri K.S. Venkataramani was with Rajen Babu at that time and K.S.V. himself told me this.'

Siva continued: 'It is all due to His grace. We are merely instruments in His hands. We should always see in what ways we can promote the work: and we should avoid the evils that eat away the very roots of the organisation. Jealousy, for instance, is a great evil which will prevent the growth of any institution. But, it is a human vice. It is in everyone. It can be totally eradicated only when one attains Brahma Jnana.

'But, what we should all strive to do is to cripple jealousy so that it is unable to work its way into the very vitals of our being. This can be done only through constant Vichara and Vairagya. When jealousy arises in the mind, try to put it down and prevent it from taking positive shape. 'Anger is another evil. If you get angry towards anyone in the morning, in the noon you should do Vichara and in the evening, you should make proper amends and become one with the other man. Always try to co-operate with all, adapt yourself with all, mix with all, and work for all. The most important point is service. That should be your motto. Then everything will be all right. You should every moment feel: How can I enable the divine life message reach thousands of more aspirants? Then, gradually, all evil qualities will leave you.'

20th DECEMBER, 1948

NO IMPORT: BUT CULTIVATION

Chidanandaji's discourse was on Raja-Yoga during the morning class today. Siva felt that the visitors should have the benefit of listening to C's discourse. He sent Vishnuji to call them.

Sri Sthanu Subramania lyer who was staying down-hill near the Ganges-bank at once went up to the Bhajan Hall to attend the class: but, Sri R.N. who was staying very near the Hall failed to turn up, even after being called.

Commenting on this peculiar behaviour, Siva said:

'Everything depends on the Samskaras with which each man is born. A man full of evil Samskaras will not enjoy Satsang in the same measure as another born with good Samskaras. A devotee with spiritual Samskaras will thirst for Satsang, will run to places where Satsang is held: but one who has not got them will neglect to attend even if the Satsang is held next doors.

These virtues are products of long and arduous cultivation. One divine quality is fully developed in man as a result of patient endeavour through many lives. That R.N. is here shows that he has some good Samskaras. In course of time, these will gain strength and he will take delight in Satsang.

21st DECEMBER, 1948

MOTTO OF SERVICE

The Superintendent of Post Offices has come to inspect the Ananda Kutir Branch Post Office.

The moment he was ushered into the office by Sri Atmaramji and was introduced to Siva, Siva showered on him the blessings of Jnana: his own priceless books. Soon the Superintendent was surrounded by books, magazines and leaflets. As Siva was autographing the books, the Superintendent was explaining the purpose of his visit to Ananda Kutir:

Though, Swamiji, my main object is to inspect the Post Office's registers, etc., I was equally eager to pay you my respects in person. My brother-in-law also wanted to have your Darshan.'

'Are the Post Office accounts and registers here all right?'

I am going to inspect them formally, Swamiji. But, I am sure, they must be all right. We have had no worries about this Post Office. We know that the Post Office is being managed very efficiently, in spite of the very heavy load of work they have to

carry. Because, your motto, as also the motto of all the workers here, is selfless service.'

'How do you know?'

'Swamiji, even though I have not visited this Ashram previously, I have heard a lot about your humanitarian services and the noble work the Ashram is doing."

22nd DECEMBER, 1948

I BELONG TO YOU

Today is the 87th Birthday of Sri Raghavacharyaji, the founder of Sri Darshana Mahavidyalaya, near the Ashram. Siva had been invited and he went up to the Vidyalaya with fruits, etc.

As he was nearing the Vidyalaya, Sri Raghavacharyaji, Sri Vishnu Dutt Sastriji and others were hurrying towards him to welcome him. Noticing this, Siva remarked: 'Do not trouble yourself, Maharaj, I belong to you all. This honour is, therefore, superfluous.'"

DUTY OF DISCIPLES

Siva then delivered an inspiring talk. After describing in detail Sri R.'s services, to the cause of the spread of Sanskrit knowledge and a knowledge of the Darshanas, Siva felt that Sri Acharyaji's disciples should join hands with one another and bring out a short life-sketch of Sri R. It is your duty, the duty of all the disciples of Sri Acharyaji Maharaj. Where there is a will, there is a way. You should all at once set about the task.'

SAGUNA vs. NIRGUNA

Siva led the gathering to the famous RAM chant. He demonstrated to them how his RAM chant in some respects even excelled OM chanting. 'OM is Nirguna and RAM is Saguna.

Chant RAM. It is even more inspiring. You will quickly get into Bhava Samadhi. It will bestow on you peace and joy.'

THE DESTROYER OF EVILS

Then Siva taught them the loud RAM Japa-Kirtan. It is unique. You have to quickly repeat Ram Ram Ram. This is wonderful,' said Siva. It is very efficacious when you wish to counteract evil thoughts. You can gain peace very quickly. Not only this, this quick chanting of RAM automatically brings about Kevala-Kumbhak and thus goes a long way in stilling the thoughts. It is a powerful form of exercise also. It increases the gastric fire. You will be able to digest your food properly. This is an all-round exercise, very suitable to you all, the disciples of Acharyaji, who is a Samuchaya Vadin.'

LIFE OF MY LIFE

Siva noticed some books lying stacked in a corner. He quickly pointed out to one of the inmates of the Vidyalaya (and this effectively proves the truth of the earlier remark: 'I belong to you'): 'Please keep these books nicely. They are very precious. They are more valuable than our life itself. Tie them nicely in a good wrapping paper and keep them safely. I will ask Kesavji to assist you in this work.' Who else will do this? Divine Life is dissemination of spiritual knowledge: and whoever does this, Siva is at-one with him.'

23rd DECEMBER, 1948

BLESSED IRONFILINGS

I was just passing along the veranda outside the dining hall when I heard this very interesting conversation between Sri Balanji and a visitor. I reproduce the gist of it: it gives you an idea of what Siva did silently, months ago.

'Balanji, I heard your wonderful lecture this morning and last evening. How long have you been here?' The visitor obviously was unaware of the fact that Sri Balan is an M.A. and a prosperous free-lance journalist.

'I came here a little over a year ago on just a casual visit. I stayed for a couple of days and felt irresistibly like staying on. On and on I have stayed, granting myself piece-meal extensions, until at last I feel that I have, as you would say, come to stay.'

The visitor was deeply interested. With just an exclamation 'Achcha?', that involuntarily escaped him, he listened, eyes gleaming in curiosity.

'You see,' continued B: 'there is the rare blessing of Ganges here. You might say that there are other places where the Ganga flows. There are the Himalayas. I know you would again say that there are other places in the Himalayas. You have a Society here that has its numerous departments to cater to the needs of aspirants of all temperaments. Here, again, you might suggest that there are other institutions approximating to this, or at least with departments enough to suit MY temperament. But, then, you do not have one thing anywhere else. And, that is the closest proximity to a living sage and Jnani (and, what is extra-ordinary) who would talk freely with you, mix with you, crack jokes with you, at the same time, clear all your doubts by his mere glance and elevates you by his mere thought. He is truly your father, mother, friend, all.

'Not only I: but quite a few there are like me who just came for a day and then decided to spend their whole life here. Do you know our Sivanarayanji who delivers inspiring Hindi lectures? He, too, came three years ago just to attend the Birthday celebrations. He used to deliver Hindi lectures during the celebrations. His talks were highly interesting, full of educative humour, of stories and

anecdotes which produced side-splitting laughter among the hearers. Swamiji found good spiritual Samskaras in him and suggested he might stay on for some time more. S. actually renounced the world and has stayed on. The miraculous thing: this has saved his life, so to say, because he was living in what is now Pakistan. S. attributes all this to Swamiji's grace and timely suggestion. What else do you call a person who gives you life, than father and mother in one?'

'With a look suggestive of an inward envy at the happy and glorious lot of these ironfilings who were without any effort on their own part drawn to the Great Magnet Siva, the visitor left the spot. He must have reflected within himself: 'Has this iron-filing, myself, reached that level of rustless purity that would enable it to be drawn to the magnet?'

SCALE OF VALUES

Sri Seth, the Society's auditor, expresses profound gratitude at having been able to stay in the Ashram.

Siva said: This is your own home. You can come here as often as you can. You are, after all, so near. Make it a point to spend all your holidays here and attend all important functions here."

"Swamiji, the world is such that if, instead of saying all this, you had said: 'Come to Rishikesh. There is such and such a chance of your acquiring ten thousand rupees.' I would have rushed to Rishikesh any number of times. It is very difficult to gauge the value that one derives from this Satsang, seclusion and Tirtha Yatra. Very few people can even understand that there is a lot of good in them."

How true, indeed!

28th DECEMBER, 1948

OLD MAN'S SONG

Swami Omkaranandaji and I had been deputed by Siva to represent him at the Tehri-Garhwal Constituent Assembly to be inaugurated at Tehri tomorrow.

Familiarity breeds contempt: is a proverb in which I had cent per cent belief. For once I had to experience an exception.

At Rishikesh, we ran into a tea-shop for a cup of tea. The shop-keeper is an old resident of Rishikesh.

I have been here for the past forty years. I have been watching all the Sadhus and Mahatmas. But I have never seen any one approaching Swami Sivanandaji's greatness.'

'Oh Yes, he has written a number of books,' explained someone else.

That is all right. Of course, he is a great learned man, too. But my point is not that. I have never met anyone who has got his heart. Swami Sivanandaji's is a divine heart. I remember how he used to serve all sick Sadhus and Sanyasins, poor people and lepers here. I shudder to think: he used often to sleep with dangerously sick patients suffering from cholera and typhoid. No, no: there is no one in the world with Sivanandaji's heart.'

30th DECEMBER, 1948

SIVA THANKS YOU

The crowded Sadhana Week programme had almost come to an end. The Drama 'Four Letters of Yama' had been staged under the direction of Sri Swami Chidanandaji. Many were the interludes to the play: there was the humorous Doctors' Parade conducted by Sri Kesavji with his discourse on Namopathy and its uniqueness; there was the formal opening of the Anand Kutir Brahma Jnana Research Pharmacy with Swami Chidanandaji as the doctor-in-charge (Dr. Brahman) and with sparkling humour C. explained his Adhyatmic prescription for the root-maladies of man: lust,

anger, greed, etc.; and there was Siva's dialogue between meat and milk, which, Chidanandaji explained, actually meant Rajas vs. Sattwa; dialogue between Astika and Nastika; and discussion among the senses regarding their superiority. The boys taking part in the Four Letters had given a very good account of themselves, especially in the tense death-scene.

Siva stood up on the platform, and spoke in fluent Hindi. Below is the gist of his stirring address.

I thank you all for coming here on this occasion, for sitting through this performance in this cold. I am deeply indebted to you all for this.'

Look at Siva's attitude: surely, the entire audience is grateful to him for taking all this trouble for their sake! But, no: HE is grateful, and HE thanks you for giving him an opportunity to serve you. Let us all learn this Yoga attitude from him.

MORAL OF THE DRAMA

'Lord Yama sends four letters to man. But, every time he is misguided by his worldly friends, and he ignores these letters. Hair turn grey: but he paints them black. Teeth fall: he takes on false teeth. Eye-sight fails: he puts on spectacles. His vitality is exhausted: he resorts to tonics. He does not see that death is inevitable; and that only God's Name will really help him in the end. In the end, he repents. But it is too late. He cries for help. But who can help him? There is only 'matlab' (selfish) friendship in the world. Note this point well. No one but the Lord Himself is your real friend. Everyone else loves you for his or her own purpose. Understand this moral very well.

'Always repeat the Name of the Lord. Merely doing one or two Malas of Japa will not do. All the day you should repeat His name. Then only will His grace descend upon you and save you.

This is a very easy form of Sadhana. This is the safest, too. Even if you don't realise God in this birth, if you go on repeating His name, you will continue the thread in the next birth: the Samskaras will be there and you will soon realise Him.'

MAHA MANTRA

With 'Sunaja' Kirtan (Siva's favourite), he continued:

Serve Love Give Purify Meditate Realise

Be good, Do good, Be kind, Be compassionate.

This is the essence of all the Vedas, of all Sastras, Puranas, not only of the Hindu religion, but of all the religions of the world. Always aspire to purify the Antahkarana. Service alone can purify the heart. Service will give you opportunities of analysing yourself and finding out the impurities that lurk in you. Gradually you should develop all the Daivi Sampath or divine qualities.

'IsavasyamIdam Sarvam-the Lord pervades the entire creation. Realise this well. Feel this. Bow to all. Be kind to all. When you have some sweetmeats, distribute them to others' children first, before giving them to your children. This is the way to develop the heart. Give to the health officer (scavenger, in Siva's dictionary!) the fruits that you take yourself: do not give him stale plantain fit only to be thrown away. Analyse yourself. See how many good Samskaras you have developed. Look at the Auditor's wife. Even in this cold, she daily goes to the Ganga for her bath in the morning. Find out how many good Samskaras you have implanted in yourself. Perfection is not an easy thing: but you need not despair, you will surely attain perfection if you purify yourself every moment.'

ONENESS OF GOD

Siva had instituted the two-party Kirtan with Krishna Dhwanis. After some time, he said:

There is Uma Raniji: she is a devotee of Lord Siva, and she would like Siva-Dhwanis.' So saying, he started Siva-Dhwanis.

'All the names are one. God is one. He is called variously. Particularly, in the case of Rama Bhaktas, they are asked to repeat the Panchakshari for six months in the beginning, and worship Siva. It is said that only then will they get Rama's Darshan. There is a secret behind this: Sivasya Hridayam Vishnur, Vishnoscha Hridayam Sivah'. Both are one. Do not act like the silly devotee of Siva who plugged the Vishnu-side nostril of a combined image, lest the fumes from the incense which he was waving before the image should enter Vishnu's nostril. Know that all forms of the Lord are one: all names of the Lord are one and have equal effect. Some people foolishly imagine that one name is superior to another. Soham is the best they will say. What do they understand by Soham? They think that the body is the Atman. What else can they understand? Their minds are full of dirt. Without cleansing their minds, they cannot understand the Mahavakyas. They do not practise Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. They speak derisively of these: they jump to Jnana Yoga. Finally, they achieve nothing at all.

MODERATION

Again, Siva sang his other favourite Kirtan in the Maha Mantra tune:

Eat a little, drink a little, talk a little, sleep a little,

Mix a little, move a little, work a little, rest a little.

'Eat and drink in moderation. You will have health and long life. It does not mean that you should starve. You should be moderate. Have one good meal at noon. Take a light diet of milk and fruits at night: that too before night-fall. In this respect, the Jain custom of finishing their supper before sunset is very healthy. When you

go to bed, you should have digested your food. Then you will have a refreshing sleep: and you will be able to get up at + o'clock next morning.

'But, what people generally do is just the reverse. They run hither and thither during the day: and at night, that too very late, they take a heavy diet. They do not have proper digestion. They suffer from dyspepsia. They do not enjoy sound sleep. And, on top of it all, they get up at 8 a.m. A day's programme is before them. They do not know what to do. They get bewildered. Their mind is confused.

'Mixing with all sorts of people is very bad. That does not mean that you should be gloomy and secluded. Talk to people: be cheerful: but be moderate in this. Too much of talking will only result in fights and quarrels.'

He again sang the song.

This is the Song of A Little. You will be able to remember this very easily. The moment you think of 'A Little', you will remember the instructions, too. This is the Law of Association which governs the mind. Have you not heard of the famous 'tion' sentence? Examination is a great botheration to the Hindu nation whose sole occupation is cultivation.

Everyone laughed.

'Here you will make many pious resolves. But the next morning, you will forget all about them. Get these small songs by heart. Sing them every morning and evening. They will inspire you. They will not allow you to slumber again.'

At this stage, Siva noticed that some people were feeling drowsy, while some people were slightly inattentive (the time was nearly 12 midnight.)

I have got a medicine which will revive you marvellously. You will get new vitality without having recourse to tea. Now sing:

Jaya Jaya Radhe Shyaaaammm.....

Jaya Jaya Sita Raaaaaaaammmmmm...

Now, the shooting Dhwanis:

SHYAM SHYAM SHYAM

(The words are shot out with force)

The effect of these on the audience was miraculous. Siva continued:

'Remember the moral of today's drama always. The more you reflect on it, the more strength you will get. Vairagya alone is the priceless treasure. Turn away from the world: and direct your gaze towards the Lord in the heart. Do not run after worldly pleasures. You can never get any satisfaction in them. Even a millionaire is only a poor man. A crorepathy is more worried than an ordinary man. When the bank fails, the crorepathy's heart also fails. He sleeps over the concealed iron-safe in which he has stored his wealth. He is afraid of thieves. Even his sons hate him: everyone is jealous of him. He has hardly a true friend. Throw away worldly riches and acquire the priceless treasure of God's name. No one can rob you of this wealth.'

Then Siva sang his Vedantic song:

Sarvam Brahmamayam re re

Sarvam Brahmamayam

Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat

Sarvam Vishnumayam

Matha Pitha Brahmam

Ladka Ladki Brahmam

Ganevala Brahmam

Sunnevala Brahmam

Orange juice Brahmam

Soda Lemonade Brahmam

Tablavala Brahmam

Harmoniumvala Brahmam.

'People with little understanding cannot realise the significance of this great truth: Sarvam Brahmamayam. But, when you have real Vairagya and Viveka, then you will understand the real meaning. People who try to understand and interpret the utterances of the sages with the help of their own finite intellect are deluded and they are led astray. They are like Virochana in the Upanishads.

'Sarvam Brahmamayam means that the Adhishthana or support for all is Brahman. The name and form are illusory. You will have to negate them and take the essence, the substratum of everything, which is Brahman.

This understanding will come only when the mind is purified of its dross through selfless service and Upasana. Therefore, I say again: serve, love, purify, meditate and realise.'

Sri Sudarshan Sareen specially requested Siva to sing his 'Govinda' song. Siva poured forth his precious instructions in the form of this famous song. The Nature of God, ethical teachings, essence of Yoga-all are given in the form of this beautiful song. Siva concluded the song with:

May God bless you Govinda

With health and long life Govinda

Peace and Prosperity Govinda

And Kaivalya Moksha Govinda

May you all become Govinda

Jivanmuktas Govinda

In this very birth Govinda

31st DECEMBER, 1948

SIVANANDA'S SIVA

Today is the Viswanath Mandir Pratishtha Anniversary Day. A programme of Ekadasha Rudra Abhishekam and Laksharchana is being put through in the temple. The Abhishekam is over and several Sadhus and Sadhakas are sitting inside the Mandir worshipping the Lord with flowers and bael leaves. The Laksharchana had already progressed well and the Lord (Siva Lingam) had been fully covered over with a thick shawl of flowers: a wonderful sight.

Siva was circumambulating around the temple. Suddenly he appeared at the threshold of the shrine. One of the Sadhakas offered Siva some flowers and bael leaves to worship the Lord with. And, as the Sannyasin outside was going on with his recitation of the Mantras, Siva also joined us in offering flowers to the Lord. This went on for a few minutes.

Lo! In a mood of complete self-forgetfulness, Siva had turned on the Sadhus and Sadhakas sitting around the Lingam and is worshipping them with the flowers intended for the Lord. I looked up: but there was not a trace on Siva's countenance or eyes that would indicate his recognition of who exactly we were. The eyes gazed on: they looked at us- but what can anyone say what he saw?

Sadhus and Sannyasins had vanished: Grihasthas and disciples had vanished: boys and old men had vanished: man and woman

had vanished: all distinctions melted away before his purified gaze. Lord Siva alone remained. Siva in the Linga being worshipped by Siva in the human garb. And, Siva worships Siva in the Lingam and in all: Sarvam Siva-mayam,-a silent discourse.

JANUARY, 1949

3rd JANUARY, 1949

JAPA YOGA SADHANA

A visitor wanted Purascharana-rules. He desired to perform a Purascharana of the Panchakshari. Siva explained to him the essential points.

'Swamiji, I don't know if I can every day spare so much time.'

It does not matter. Do Japa for about two hours in the morning and two hours in the night, and, if possible, increase this period. But, on that account, do not miss the morning and evening Satsang. Sit down on your Asana, pray to the Lord and then commence your Japa. Repeat the Mantra slowly. Keep a watch by your side one day and find out the rate at which you are repeating the Mantra. Then you can give up counting beads. Supposing, you find that you are able to do 30 Malas in one hour, calculate the number of Malas that you daily perform according to the time you have sat. This will prevent distraction in counting.'

NO CONTRACT WITH GOD

'How many Malas of Japa should I do, Swamiji?'

'Five lakhs. But, to be sure, continue till you reach six lakhs. You should not have the contractor's mentality with God. Do the Japa with Nishkamya Bhava. No rules will worry you.

MIGHTY INTELLECT, BUT?

Sri R. Ramakrishna of Karachi (now at New Delhi) has come with a harmonium for the Ashram.

He narrated to Siva the gist of a thrilling lecture by an independent spiritual leader (what a contradiction in terms -one cannot be independent and a leader at the same time).

'Swamiji, Sri.... stresses on the immediate individual transformation to be brought about by Sell-awareness, and asserts that the awakened individual will then be able to establish the right relationship with environments. His theme he begins with an intellectual analysis of one's own emotions which through the mental process of naming them as such become anger, lust, jealousy, etc. Then such feelings are recorded in memory. This triple process of experiencing, naming and recording the emotions is the work of mind or self-projection or thought-feeling. The separation of the Thinker from his thought, which is a mental process, leads to the cessation of thought process. When the awakened individual is alive to the force behind his emotions, it is a state of Being called LOVE in which the individual experiences an inward richness and creative joy. He is face to face with the Reality which has no end and which is never static and viewed from the relative standpoint of time, is ever new, ever fresh, from moment to moment. When he says this, Swamiji, it is so convincing and inspiring. He does not have any organisation; and he actually condemns organisations, and also the institution of Guru and disciple. He does not believe in or quote from any scripture. He does not advocate any religion but he says that he has arrived at the Truth independently himself. He does not like Kirtan and speaks of them derisively as the shouting-class.'

'You should not attend such lectures,' instantly came Siva's reply. What a travesty of truth. Lord Krishna has clearly said in the Gita that one should not unsettle another's faith. That is why the Sastras emphatically declare the need for a Guru: the Guru alone will be able to understand the aspirant's state and prescribe the proper Sadhana. The same instructions do not suit all: and if you enunciate some general principles, they should not be antagonistic to anyone else's principles. These instructions are suitable only for the microscopic minority. For advanced students who are

well-versed in psychology. Those who have faith in the Lord's name, in Japa, Kirtan, and the Yoga of Synthesis, should not attend such lectures. Their faith in their own Sadhana will be shaken: they will not know exactly how to proceed on the new path: and torn between the two, they will simply collapse midway.

Further, organisations are necessary, if you want to do some real and substantial service to humanity. Everyone has his own organisation. Take the case of this Sri....: is he not being looked after by the public? Does he not have a following? That is the organisation, though he may not call it so, and register it. If you have no selfish motives, there is no harm in having an organisation.

LITTLE THINGS MATTER A LOT

In the evening Satsang, Rampremji had concluded today's portion of Vinaya Patrika. Quietly, he folded the right-hand top corner of the particular leaf, to serve as a book-mark, and closed the book. But, Siva of all people there had noticed this.

'No, no: Rampremji, don't do that. If you go on doing so, the pages will start breaking. The book will be spoiled. This is a little thing: but it matters a lot. These little habits of carelessness and ease-loving nature you should try to overcome. Place a proper book-mark-a piece of paper.

This is not the only one. There are people who, when they find it difficult to turn a leaf in the book, will bring their saliva to use. God did not intend saliva to be used for this. To prevent this only have the Sastras prohibited such practices, as unholy. They are unhygienic, too.

There are several other practices which a Sadhaka especially should avoid. Cracking the finger joints is one such thing.

Spitting, especially when it is accompanied with a roaring throat-clearing sound, is another. When you are in others' company, disturbing others, especially when they are in meditation, with curious noises is another. These little things go a long way in forming a Sadhaka's character.

6th JANUARY, 1949

MANAGER SIVANANDA

A devotee came into the office to have Darshan of 'Swamiji'. Siva greeted her with an OM and folded palms, made her sit on the bench near-by and started enquiring about her health, the Yatra, etc. When Siva resumed his work, the lady quietly walked out, feeling a bit uneasy to sit in the office idly, where others were busy with their work.

Near the dispensary, she asked Sri Swami Chidanandaji: 'Where is Swamiji? When can I see him?'

Chidanandaji was amused, as he had noticed that the lady came straight from the office where Siva was at the time.

'Swamiji is in the office. Why, you are coming from there only. Have you not seen him?'

'He, with a coat and spectacles, sitting there? Is he Swamiji? I thought he was the Manager of the Ashram!'

With tears in her eyes, she ran back and fell at Siva's feet. The tears washed away the defective vision which sought to recognise saintliness only in externalities and to disregard the inner divinity clothed in an overcoat: and she beheld before her now the pure Satchidananda who, for the sake of sport, has clothed himself with the Koshas.

TRAINING IN EMOTION CONTROL

'Satyanandaji Maharaj, nowadays you are not attending the morning class. Gradually you are becoming an Alasyananda, I think. You see: I come from my Kutir which is the farthest from the Bhajan Hall. But, you are not able to walk half the distance even!

'It does not matter. You have already acquired an immortal fame through your brilliant lectures, thrilling songs, and plays. Have you copied that article? It is a masterly production. You have a tremendous brain. Though you look like a small boy, yet you have very well developed your intellectual faculties. Try to grow fat and fat. Then you will have an impressive physique. What is this? You have no moustache also. At least put on a false moustache. Then with all this pompous dress you will look like a Maharajah. You have now established a first-rate office for yourself. You look more like a Marwari businessman, sitting at your desk. Very good: that is also necessary."

A wonderful speech! Blowing hot and cold. S.'s expression was worth watching, as it reacted to all that Siva was saying-one moment praising and the next moment pointing out a defect. That is the subtle way in which Siva trains his disciples. Instruction mixed with a lot of glorification, is highly palatable. The sugar-coating slowly melts away by constantly dwelling on what he said: and in a calm mood flashes the flowery sword. But, then, the edges are smoothened by this time, though it lodges itself deep inside the heart. We learn, but without the bitterness that naturally accompanies learning' in the world.

SHARP TONGUE

A Sadhaka had a grievance. He came into the office with a complaint against another inmate who had insulted him. Siva counselled forbearance. Later, it was pointed out to Siva by someone else that the offending party had a sharp tongue in truth.

and Everybody has a sharp tongue. After all, we are all human beings only. But the beauty lies in controlling it.

Before an offending word is uttered, you should introspect and check it. And, even if occasionally you happen to use the wrong expression, you should learn the art of smoothening the matter out at once. You should apologise to the man whom you had offended, talk to him sweetly, ask his pardon and pacify him. Gradually, your very nature will be changed.'

7th JANUARY 1949

HUMAN NATURE

The room occupied by Sri Shamash had been vacated: and several chairs and tables had been put to other use. Aramudanji was sitting on a small chair brought from the vacated room. Siva was walking on the terrace opposite the D.J. Hall. Seeing A., he remarked:

There is a peculiar joy in using other people's property, isn't it? It is part of human nature. Even if we have good chairs, we will discard them and use others just because they belong to other people. Mysterious is the mind!'

Such objective analysis of human nature, without letting the emotional aspect of our own personality or any personal equation coming into the picture at all, serves to enlighten us, and save us from the inevitable fault-finding nature apparently involved in it.

ITCHING HAND

'Padmanabhanji! Bring me one rupee worth of small coins. Write the amount as charity. Whenever I go out, I should have some small coins in my pocket. I see poor people on the road, but I have nothing to give them. In Malaya, I always used to keep a lot of small change in my pocket and distribute them to the poor. That gives me a great joy and peace. Bring the coins at once.'

P. at once brought some coins.

THIS IS MONEY?

'What is this?' asked Siva handling a half-anna coin.

'Half-anna? I have never seen this. (This coin has been in use for a considerable time now.) I do not have any occasion, because I do not handle money. It is a peculiar shaped coin. Is it enough if I give a poor man only half-anna? What will he get for it?'

It was difficult to convince Siva that half-anna was also money!

8th JANUARY, 1949

SUBTLE WAYS OF MAYA

'Swamiji, I found these two rupees near the Brahmanandashram,' Sri Menon handed Siva the coins.

'You should have found out the owner. How can we appropriate the money to ourselves just because it lay on the road? Someone else will miss it."

'No, Swamiji: it was lying on the road. If I had not taken it, it might even have been lost in the sand. Here, Swamiji, the two rupees would be put to very good use; and, in absentia, the donor will receive the Lord's blessings.'

'Ohji, this is how Maya deceives man. You see: I have just written a story about a man who was told by his Guru to shun Kamini, Kanchana and Kirti, but who was later very gradually dragged into the very pit of temptations.'

Siva turned to another Sanyasin (not belonging to the Ashram) who was sitting near him.

Ham 'Supposing you found five thousand rupees on the roadside. What will you do? Will you give them to me, for this divine work? Or.... (rocking with laughter) ....will you merely think 'I

will give two thousand to Swamiji and utilise the rest myself. After all, I have my own needs. God has given this money only for this purpose?'

This is much like saying that it was only because the amount was insignificant that the Sadhaka had the good sense of putting it to good use: otherwise, he might not be able to resist the temptation of evil. The mind will offer its own excuses: and will lead him astray.

Another strange coincidence which I could not fail to notice is this. Siva had just yesterday expressed his holy wish to have some small change always in his pocket for the purpose of 'charity on the roadside'. Ere a rupee is exhausted, there is this charity from the roadside! Strange are the ways of the divine and His messengers.

MAKES THE DUMB ELOQUENT

Siva has received a letter from the Kali Kamliwala Kshetra requesting his help in the matter of holding Kathas and Satsang under the auspices of the Kshetra. Siva had already deputed three Ashramites to deliver lectures on four days in the month. Swami X is in the Ashram today on account of the Birthdate celebration. Siva very tactfully (it will be impossible for anyone to narrate how this is done: you will have to see it for yourself, how an unwilling horse walks into harness without compulsion and of its own accord) persuaded the Swami to take part in the Kshetra's programme. Part of the conversation I shall narrate here:

'You deliver such thrilling lectures, Swamiji. How are you able to do so if you are not holding frequent Kathas and discourses? How do you remember all the stories and points? Many people lose touch with this faculty and it is dullened'

'I do not deliver any lectures and Kathas. But, I teach students if they come to me,' replied the Swami.

'But, yet, your discourses are like those of learned pundits who have made lecturing their profession.'

'Swamiji,' confessed the Swami: 'but for your grace, I would not have been able to deliver even one lecture in my life. It is only because you forced me in the first instance to deliver lectures that today I am able to hold an audience. Otherwise, I would have remained dumb, Swamiji. Your grace it is that has made me eloquent."

MISINTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURES

Topic drifted: and the Swami told Siva:

'Swamiji, in his discourse, that Acharya gave a strange meaning to the Upanishadic Utterance:

Na Ayam Atma Pravachanena Labhyah

Na Medhaya, Na Bahuna Shrutena

He says that this decries the utility of Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana. He interprets 'Pravachana' to affect Sravana: 'Medhaya' to affect Manana: and 'Bahuna Shrutena' to affect Nididhyasana. And, he has made out a queer meaning of this to the effect that the Atman is not to be attained by Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana; but by the grace of the Lord alone. He says that this is the view of Visishtadwaita.

Another student of Vedanta present in the office pointed out to Siva that the Dwaita Vadins have found a hidden 'a' in the quotation from Chhandogya Upanishad where the Mahavakhya occurs. Atmaatattwamasi they have construed to mean 'Atma Atatwamasi', i.e., Thou art NOT That!'

Siva was greatly amused and he said:

'You see: the Acharyas are not at fault. Ramanujacharya was great: and he has stressed the doctrine of grace and devotion, as he found that the vast majority of the people were not suited to direct Adwaitic initiation. These are all several rungs in the ladder. Dwaita, Visishtadwaita and then Adwaita. People should not indulge in these misinterpretations and 'Khandana'. Philosophers and seers should always synthesise: and their followers should understand the spirit of the Acharya's teachings and desist from condemning followers of other schools.

EVER READY TO SERVE

At 11 a.m. Siva was told that at 12, the foundation for a new Kutir (to be built by Sri Gajanana Sharma of Janjgir) was to be laid. Already Siva had made two rounds of the hillock: once in the morning for the class and again his usual trip to the cave. And, food was waiting: it was getting late. Yet, such is Siva's readiness to oblige, Siva walked up all the way to bless the foundation-stone-laying ceremony.

9th JANUARY, 1949

THE FORMIDABLE GULF OF SLIGHT DIFFERENCE

Govindaswamiji's heart ached to see Siva clad in an overcoat worn out with age! It was once upon a time a good woolen coat. It had served its master well. Now, it looks like a gunny-bag. Suns and moons adorn its face, revealing the inner garments here and there. Yet, it was proud of the love that Siva bore towards it: and on Siva's back it laughed perhaps at a newer coat lying unused.

'Swamiji, this coat is torn all over the back. It looks ugly also. Please wear the other, new coat."

Siva looked up and smiled.

'Achcha? It is torn? Very well: but it keeps the warmth all right.

People are prone to imitate a saint when he enjoys certain creature comforts: they misunderstand the saint's behaviour when they see that he also wears good, nice clothes: he also takes sweetmeats.' But they hardly understand the inner difference, the vital difference that there is between the saint's attitude towards these and their own. The saint cares not if Prarabdha brings him silk gowns or dirty rags. He greets both with a happy smile. The dull-witted aspirant rejoices in fashionable dress and new clothes, and thinks that he is right in doing so,-does not the saint wear these. He would preach to others that equanimity is the secret and that the costly wearing apparel does not taint him. But, ask him to wear a torn coat or a dirty dhoti: the old Abhiman will raise its head from within.

That is the difference. It is very subtle. It is like the deep chasm that separates two mountain-peaks very close to each other. From a distance the gulf appears to be very slight: and you think you can walk over it. When you approach it, you discover that the very sight of it makes your head reel. That is why Lord Krishna warned Sadhakas to obey His words and not to imitate His actions.

11th JANUARY, 1949

SWAMI RAMANANDAJI

Today is Vaikuntha Ekadashi, a highly auspicious day.

Early in the morning, as we entered his room, we found Ramanandaji had passed away. He had been suffering from asthma for the past some weeks: but the end was sudden and unexpected. He had carried on his work till the very last day.

When Siva was told of it, he merely nodded his head. A little later, when we took out the body for giving it a bath. Siva saw the calm face. 'He does not even show any signs of death. Don't be

hasty: first give some artificial respiration, administer a couple of injections: make sure that he is not merely in a swoon.

Sadhakas rushed here and there. Two people rubbed R's feet with liniment turpentine: two administered artificial respiration: Chidanandaji was giving injections. Siva himself sat beside the body and rubbed the chest with 'Hare Rama' Kirtan.

When Padmanabhan who was giving the artificial respiration let go the hand, R's hand fell down on the ground just touching Siva's foot.

After some time, it was declared that life was long ago extinct from the body. 'All right, now say Krishna Bhagavan ki Jai' said Siva and permitted us to carry on with the last rites. Siva himself poured the first vesselful of Ganges-water on the body, with Panchakshari Kirtan.

Everyone talked about Ramanandaji: how very quietly he passed away: on such an auspicious day: without causing any inconvenience to anyone: in harness, working up to the last breath: etc., etc. Siva gave a quick reply:

'Why! His entire life was most exemplary. He was a pucca Vedantin. He never had any connection with his Purvashrama family after he came here. He never hankered after any comforts or good food. He never interfered with anyone else's affairs. He had led a perfect life. He had convened three Divine Life Conferences in Rangoon, and one Religions' Conference. He has rendered great service to humanity. What more do you want?'

Someone then remarked: 'Swamiji, he has always been saying that he would prefer to die at Swamiji's feet and that he would never leave the Ashram, whatever be the physical inconvenience.' May his soul rest in peace!

12th JANUARY, 1949

THE FOURTH RESORT

Siva is a Perfect Master, as S.N. has eulogised him to be. He is a first-rate diplomat (with a difference), more subtle in his ways than even Chanakya. He adopts all the four devices to correct a Sadhaka-Sama, Daana, Bheda and Danda.

I consider it a blessed day when the fourth is applied.

Truly, in this world, blessedness consists of getting a thing which is beyond reach: God. With Siva, chastisement is more or less a far-off impossibility: and a strange feeling creeps into me when I see him assume Roudrakara.

Blessed is the Sadhaka towards whom this Roudrakara is turned. For, he has obtained the unobtainable. The Roudrakara Siva revolutionises him for his eternal good.

The occasion was the meeting on the road one of the inmates who, of late, had started dodging the morning class.

'Why! You have stopped coming to the morning class and evening class, too. You think that you will become a pundit by cramming some Sanskrit lessons?.... (Turning to us)....Such people should not be kept in the Ashram. I don't care about the work. The work can be carried on with the help of paid staff... (To him again)... What sort of a Sadhu you will grow into? An indisciplined man. He who breaks the discipline is the worst criminal. Further, think of your great loss. I never miss a class: go with the attitude of student, ever eager to learn. But, you think you have learnt everything. What a pity!'

The boy hung his head down and slipped away. That moment, Siva's attitude also changed. The beloved mother grew tender again. He walked on.

13th JANUARY, 1949

EXERCISES WHILE SITTING

During the morning class, Siva taught us some very good sitting-pose exercises.

Asans and Pranayama have the body as their basis. Siva is never content to let them remain so. He would insist on the practitioner bringing his mind also into play. Thus, he prescribes certain Bhavanas, e.g., the Bhavana that the seminal energy is being converted into Ojas Shakti during the practice of Sirsasana and Sarvangasana. And, he insists that the Sadhaka should go on repeating some Mantra mentally all the time.

This morning he started with Uddiyana and Agnisara while sitting comfortably on Sukhasana.

'Mentally, repeat TAT while drawing the abdomen in: and repeat SAT while resuming the normal position. This applies to Uddiyana and Agnisara Kriya."

Then, the Yoga Mudra with a corresponding backward bend of the spine: first touching the floor with the nose and then, in a swing, bending the spine in the opposite direction resting on hands placed just behind the body. The same Mantra is repeated in the two processes.

Similarly, lateral twisting of the spine. First, a slight twist towards the left side, enough to enable you to place both palms on the floor to your left: then the same thing on the right side. The Mantra is to be repeated here also.

Then Bhastrika in the same posture.

You would have sat comfortably in Sukhasana and within a few minutes you would have revitalised the entire system. The little attention you pay to the body and the mind will be amply rewarded in physical and mental health.'

OM TAT SAT DRILL

OM we uttered while still sitting in Sukhasana.

Siva then taught us the following drill:

We assumed the arms-bent-forward position with clenched fists.

TAT: throw the hands forward in a line with the shoulder.

SAT: resume the clenched fist position.

TAT: throw the hands sideways in a line with the shoulder.

SAT: resume the clenched fist position.

TAT: raise the hands, straight, above the head.

SAT: resume the clenched fist position.

Thus, without taking the trouble of changing position or taking off your coat, you will be able to perform a very useful exercise.

SUPREME COMPASSION

Man is generally compassionate towards himself. He is then nearer the quadrupeds. A little wider-visioned man extends his compassion to his family. He has not yet crossed the border. Another man gradually envelopes the village, district and nation with his compassion. Selflessness, to a degree, is manifest in him: he is really a MAN. A saint's compassion extends to humanity at large. A divine personality is compassionate towards all living beings yet, within this world. What shall we call one whose compassion flows to planes other than this? Such indeed is Siva.

After the morning class was over, he suddenly confronted us with a suggestion. From now, the first of every month will be observed here as the ALL SOULS DAY. We should offer special prayers for the peace of all departed souls. In this modernised materialistic world, Dharma has long ago been lost. Many religions have come into being in India itself that condemn

ancestor-worship, Sraddhas and Tarpana. The departed souls are in great grief. They naturally look to us to help them. We must do this.'

Someone pointed out that a Spiritualist who had recently visited the Ashram had contacted several departed souls who declared that they were eternally grateful to Siva for his Kirtans and prayers for their peace. They said that they had received great benefit through his mercy.

Another incident has already been chronicled: Sri Gauri Prasadji's grand-daugter who rejoiced at Siva's Kirtan.

The programme will be,' Siva continued: 'in the morning, we should arrange for consecrated food-offerings to the departed souls. There will be a special Ekadasha Rudra Abhishekam at the temple. We can have poor-feeding and Sadhu Bhojan also. In the evening, there will be a special Ganga Puja when lights will be floated on the waters of the Ganges in the name of the departed souls. There should be special illumination in the temple.'

'More expenses...' someone thought. The thought was at once read by Siva. 'Ohji, don't worry about the funds. They will come. When the Pitrus (manes) are pleased, they will goad their descendants to contribute to the Society. When old people hear of this arrangement, they will allot some portion of their properties to the Society in their Will. Our motive should be pure. We should always endeavour to serve all with selfless love, God will look after us.'

'Swamiji, you are perfectly right,' said an aged inmate. 'We started the worship in the temple. Since then, the Ashram has attained to rare heights of prosperity. Who would have expected the growth of the Ashram so rapidly? How many Kutirs, how many typewriters, how many books it is no joke. Surely, all these are

indications that the Devas are highly pleased: the Lord is highly pleased with the worship here.'

I told you: Lord Siva has run away from Kailas at the ceaseless chanting of Rudram and Chamakam here: and has taken his permanent abode in the Vishwanath Mandir.'

'But, Swamiji,' slowly put another aged devotee: 'you are an Adwaitin. Why should you encourage these Karmas? Where are the departed souls: and how are we to please them?'

That is the mistake we commit. Do not mix up Absolute Truth with relative activities. So long as the body is there, so long as you think of the body, adorn it, feed it and look after it, you are in the relative plane only. You can, by all means, study and try to understand Vedanta: but you should not attempt to bring it into Vyavahara. When you have converted this body into a worn-out leather bag to be used or discarded at will, then you can discard all these Karmas also. Till then, you have to believe and carry on all these actions.

15th JANUARY, 1949

FROM MALAYA

A doctor from Malaya has arrived with his wife. After touching reverently the feet of saint Siva, he said:

'Swamiji, I had the rarest good fortune of living in the same bungalow that was previously occupied by your Holiness.'

'Is that so?' enquired Siva with childlike curiosity.

'And, Swamiji, the Tulasi that you had planted outside is still worshipped: and every day, till I left Malaya, I used to light the lamps placed around the Tulasi Peetham.'

It is customary in Hindu households to have a small Tulasi-altar in the courtyard. Tulasi is very sacred and is very dear to the

Lord. Its glory has been sung by Indian sages: and, curiously enough, its glory is being sung by eminent doctors and scientists today. The prosperous Dr. Kuppuswami (as Siva was called in his Purvashrama) was yet religious to the very core. And, he took great delight in observing all these religious customs that have been handed down from generation to generation.

'Yes, yes: even after I had left Negri-Sembilan, Dr. Parsons used to tell me every time he visited the place that the Tulasi Peetham was being maintained. I am very glad to hear that.'

They, then, fell into a discussion of the good old days and about their mutual friends.

'Swamiji, you know well that no one in Malaya, especially among those who have gone from here, was free from these evils-wine, woman and tobacco. All over Malaya you alone have acquired the unique name of having been the single man who was untouched by these evils. It is a great marvel!'

17th JANUARY, 1949

HOW TO ATTAIN COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

An intellectual friend who accompanied Sri Pindi Dassji, Manager of the Kali Kamliwala Kshetra, had a desire to know about things concerning the Self. Even as both of them entered the Hall, Siva had welcomed them with his natural hospitality, entertained them with fruits and tea and then enquired about their health, etc.

'Swamiji, I wish to ask you some questions on the spiritual side. May I?'

'Of course, you are welcome to."

'I wish to know from you, Swamiji, how I can develop Cosmic Consciousness.'

Siva looked at the questioner, as though to measure him with his eyes. After a couple of minutes came the laconic reply:

'Meditate on formulas like 'I am not the body: I am not the mind: I am the Absolute Brahman, Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Omniscient, That is of the nature of Satchidananda.' As this idea gets deeper and deeper into your mind, you will enjoy the Universal Consciousness.'

In that case, Swamiji, how am I to be sure that I am not merely hypnotising myself through these auto-suggestions? That which is beyond mind cannot be obtained through the mind's working. In that case, even meditation becomes impossible.'

'You are right: if you get into these arguments, you will come to an impossible state. Some sort of auto-suggestion is necessary in the beginning till you reach the stage of intuitive perception. These formulas have to be culled from the Upanishads which are the utterances of seers and therefore eternal verities.'"

At this stage Sri Pindidassji interrupted and asked: 'Swamiji, how are we to ensure that this consciousness is kept up throughout? When we meditate, sometimes the consciousness is aroused. But, then, again when we turn to work, this consciousness vanishes.'

You have to go on with the practice. Sadhana Chatushtaya Sampath is necessary. Mind does not want to meditate on God. It always flows outside. Ganges water always flows down: but the Yogi tries to take it up to its own source. That is Yoga. You should have to cajole the mind and coax it to do the meditation. Viveka and Vairagya are necessary: then Samadi Shat Sampath are necessary. Then Mumukshutwa will come. Then and then alone will the mind long to realise the Supreme.'

The visitor put another question: 'Some Philosopher-Yogis say that the Atman is not attained through all these Sadhanas,

Swamiji: their view seems to be, as I said, that That which is beyond the body, the mind and the intellect, cannot be attained through any amount of effort with these.'

'Quite true: that is what the Sruthi says, too. 'Na Ayamatma Pravachanena Labhyah.....' Here the Sruthi positively hints at the doctrine of grace. God's grace is necessary. Otherwise, nothing is possible.'

Sri Pindidassji: 'But how are we to deserve His grace, Swamiji?'

'Exactly, that is the point. You have to deserve the grace and invite it to descend on yourself. Therefore, these Sadhanas are prescribed. First acquire Sadhana Chatushtaya. Then do Sravana, Manana and Nidi-dhyasana and then you will have universal consciousness.'

Sri Pindidass: That is a long, long process, Swamiji. We want a short-cut, a royal road.'

That short-cut and royal road is meditation. Get up at 4 a.m. It is very favourable for meditation. Meditate on Vedantic formulas. Try as far as possible to keep up the Bhavana throughout the day. Gradually, you will become established in it.'

They were convinced: it is curious to note in this connection that without enquiring about their method, Siva had administered the right medicine, the right method, suited to them!

Then the topic turned to Swami Ram Tirtha whose admirers they both were.

Sri Pindidass: 'I have read almost all the works of Rama Tirtha and many other works on philosophy. But, you have very beautifully cleared my difficulties as no others could.

Siva said: 'Rama Tirtha was at first a Bhakta and later turned into a Vedantin. I have heard that on the sands of Brahmapuri, he used to dance with the tinklers around his ankles.

There is no difference between Bhakti and Vedanta. Bhakti leads to the same realisation of the Cosmic Consciousness. Tulasi Das, Kabir Das-all Para Bhaktas have had that Realisation.

The mind wants something to base itself on. Therefore, has Patanjali insisted that a Yogi should have OM as his Mantra and he should meditate on its significance. OM is the name of the Atman. OM is Satchidananda. OM is omniscience, omnipotence, etc., light, joy and peace. Meditate on these ideas then you will have Brahmic Consciousness. No doubt about it. Behind all names and forms, you will then perceive the Nameless and Formless Brahman.'

Sri Pindidass then narrated his own story, his interest in philosophy since his student days in Jammu.

'I had once been to Jammu also,' said Siva.

'Yes, Swamiji. I know. For it was at that time that Kirtan was started at Jammu. Before that, there was no Kirtan Prachara in Jammu. Since the time you planted the seed of Kirtan there, I cannot describe to you what a great change has come over Jammu. Everywhere Kirtan. That was solely due to your work there. And, it went on till the very day of partition and the Pakistan troubles.'

18th JANUARY, 1949

SANNYASIN, BEWARE!

The morning class again witnessed Siva burst forth in torrential thundering wisdom. Sivaratri is approaching. A few have applied for Sannyasa initiation.

'Sannyasa is not a joke. When you embrace Sannyasa, you take upon yourself a tremendous responsibility. The glory or ignominy of the entire order of Sri Sankaracharya rests upon your shoulders.

'Of course, I have always emphasised that more and more young people with vigorous limbs and health should come forward to embrace sannyasa and lead a life of complete self-dedication. There is very little purpose in a man taking Sannyasa when he has a foot in the grave. If you take Sannyasa when you are a blooming youth, you will have ample time to practise intense Tapasya, to do a lot of selfless service, to meditate, to study, to do Kirtan and Vichara, and realise the Self in this very birth.

'But, then, you should constantly remember that you are living today in a vicious world. Maya assails you on all sides. Self-realisation is not an easy thing. Ignorance is the very nature of the universe: though, in its essence, it is Satchidananda. Name and form deceive you at every step. Beware! Even Arjuna whom the Lord Himself characterised as of His own Amsa (Pandavanam Dhananjayah), who was so intimate with the Lord, who had seen the Viswarupa of the Lord which no one else had the good fortune to see, and who was personally instructed by the Lord in the Bhagavad Gita, even that Arjuna was afterwards the same man with the same nature.

'Guru can only show you the path. He can only point the goal to you. You will have to tread the Path yourself.

Guru will point out the pitfalls. You will yourself have to be cautious and avoid them. If you slip into them, remember, it is not the Guru, but you yourself, that are in the pit. But, if you, instead of treading the path of virtue, stray away into sin, you not only kill yourself, burn yourself and reduce yourself to ashes, but you bring into disrepute the Guru, the order and the illustrious

founders of the Order. Now, do you understand clearly the great responsibility that rests upon your shoulders?

The foremost among the pitfalls is lust or sexual immorality. This is the greatest curse for a Sannyasin. It is a terrible fire which burns him instantly: not only that, its effects last for many, many births. A Sannyasin should beware.

'Remember, the world will not be charmed with your erudition or knowledge of philosophy. Everyone will be watching you to find out if you have Sadhu-qualities. They will watch if you are gentle, humble and polite. If you have virtuous qualities, then you need not go and invite people to admire you. As the scented stick, when lit, wafts its smell all round without effort, so if you have virtuous qualities, people will feel themselves drawn to you. If you have the proper Bhavana, when people are walking on the road and when another Sadhu just stands there like a pole, you will remove glass-pieces from the road; you will run to the aid of a sick man or an old passerby.

'Introspect and find out. Why do you want to take Sannyasa? You will see that the mind craves for certain privileges. Egoism will be fattened. You will think: If I am a Sannyasi, people will respect me: everywhere people will call me 'Swamiji, Aiye': now I am looked down upon by some Sannyasins: they think that I am only a Brahmachari or a Grihastha. Ideas like this only impel most people to take Sannyasa: not ideas like: I will renounce and regain my Self: I will realise the Self. When this foundation itself is not there, then all your construction will be futile.

'When there is this desire to be respected, you will grow more and more sensitive. You will be very easily offended. You will be highly irritable. Fights and quarrels are the result. Intriguing, backbiting, scandal-mongering, fear, jealousy, hatred-all these come out of this one root. As you grow older, you will develop

this evil more and more. 'I have been a Sannyasin for forty years now: this little fellow has insulted me'. Diseases will increase this sensitiveness. You will soon get exasperated.

'God will test you in a million ways. Why should He not? Is the goal you aim at, a little thing? Even to a good many Bhaktas of great evolution, God has given Darshan in the form of ass, buffalo and monkey. You do not aspire for that. You do not aspire even for a vision of the Virat that Arjuna had. You wish to go beyond that, beyond Hiranyagarbha, beyond Iswara, beyond Maya-you wish to realise that Supreme Self, the Paramatman. That is the meaning of Sannyasa. Ask yourself: are you ready to sacrifice everything that is not this Supreme Self?

You are already in an Ashram which acts as an impregnable fortress to protect you. Remain in white cloth and practise Sadhana. Eradicate all evil qualities. Cultivate virtues. Think that you are in reality a Sannyasin. That itself is sufficient.

'When you take Sannyasa, you should make up your mind once and for all to stick to the path and bring glory to the Order. Never wander about. You get nothing by that and you expose yourself to all sorts of temptations. Never have anything to do with householders. You will realise too late that you have been led into the deep abyss of ruin.'

HINTS FOR SPIRITUAL ORGANISATION

This led Siva into thoughts about the future of the institution whose crest-jewel he is today.

Later in the day he gave some precious instructions to Swami Chidanandaji about the conduct of the Society's affairs and the maintenance of the Ashram.

'No one should feel estranged in the Ashram. Everyone has got so many faculties. There is capacity also to do something grand. The

Will of God also guides them. But the difficulty is that when a man leaves his hearth and home, his wife and children, his parents and relatives, his wealth and position, he feels that he is entitled to be independent and refuses to be bossed over. We should appreciate that or at least recognise its existence. Personally, each Sadhaka should take care that this independence does not blossom forth into arrogance. But those who run the institution should not hurt the individual's feelings, nor make him feel that he is being looked down upon. Each department, the moment you entrust it to a particular person, should be almost independent.

There is a difficulty in this. For instance, there is the Ayurvedic Pharmacy, the League, etc., where saleable articles are stocked. If those who handle these things are left to themselves, Maya will spread her net over them and instigate them to pilfer, thus ruining themselves and the institution. The system should be fool-proof and there should be frequent checking also.

This should not lead us into a suspicion-complex. If those who are responsible for the various departments feel that they are being watched with suspicion, their interest and zeal will be lost. Just once in a way, have an eye. It is not only good for the institution, but will prevent the individual from falling a prey to evil.

'Every Ashramite should be made to feel that this is his own home. Especially, those who do not belong to your own caste, creed, community or group should be specially looked after, lest they should feel that 'Because I am a Punjabi, I am neglected by these Madrassis'. They should be made to feel that they are, in fact, looked after better here than they would be in an Ashram predominated by their own people.

'And, there should be a sort of tribunal to settle grievances and to listen to complaints. This should meet once in a way and iron out the differences that may crop up between man and man.

'Old workers, I mean both those who are aged and those who have served the institution for a long time, should be well looked after. If a Sadhaka has served well for three or four years and has been very useful to us (like Krishnanandaji, for instance), the Society should attend to his needs till the end of his life. What little service they can render to the Society they should voluntarily do. There should be no extraction of work from them. They should be allowed to meditate and progress in their Sadhana.

'But, this should not bring about an effeminate nature in you. Some people have an intriguing nature. They will create parties, cliques, and troubles. With them you should be polite but firm. Say 'OM Namo Narayanaya, Swamiji Maharaj, you can leave the Ashram.' These vipers should not be allowed to poison the atmosphere, and create internal dissensions.

These are just some thoughts that occurred to me. Keep them in mind. The organisation has grown world-wide beyond our own expectations. It is better, therefore, that we adhere to certain principles. The whole world looks to us for guidance. It is but essential that the main hub of the institution should be efficient and run on systematic lines.

I have a feeling that even if all of us disappear from the scene, the Lord's Will will work itself out through other instruments. But, that should not lead us into complacency. We should exert our utmost to do our bit.'

20th JANUARY, 1949

ROOT OF DEPRESSION

Gazing at the beam in melancholy, A. stood before Siva. Siva's torch searched him out. Just then the Hatha Yoga class of the Forest University was over and Siva was talking about radiant health.

Why is A., such a young Brahmachari, so melancholy and morose?.. (Turning to A.)... Be happy and cheerful. Why, I have never noticed you laugh or in a happy mood even."

A was silent. After a pause Siva continued. "Something you are hiding and suppressing. This melancholy is the result of that. Be open and plain. Let the secret out. Then you will be happy and peaceful. Nothing will ever haunt you.

'A young man of your age will be ever brisk and active; will be bubbling with joy and cheer. I have never seen a boy who is always gloomy.

That shows you have not come here out of real Vairagya. If you had, you would immediately on your arrival here be full of joy and peace; for, here you have no anxiety to haunt you, no responsibilities to oppress you, no fear to frighten you, no nightmares, nothing at all that could ever make you feel depressed.

'Only when a boy runs away from the house after committing some sinful deed and even after going to an Ashram broods over it, he is depressed. Even this sort of Vairagya is good: but you should not brood over the past and thus spoil your future, too. Work, work strenuously. Take real interest in the work. Try always to engage yourself in some useful activity. You must have your finger in every kind of service. You must regularly go to the temple, prostrate before the Lord and ask His pardon for whatever you have done. There is no harm in telling me whatever the secret is. That will be a sort of Prayaschittha for the act and it will relieve the mental oppression a great deal. Everyone has got a

secret or other. Nobody in the world is there who can boldly assert that he has not sinned at all. But, Kirtan, Japa, Dhyana, Vichar, Seva and devotion to the Lord's feet burn up even Brahma-Hathya Dosha. A dip in the Ganges washes away all your sins.

'Now, cheer up. Be bold, happy, peaceful and cheerful. Nothing will ever happen to you.'

FOOD WITHOUT WORK?

A young boy had left his house and has come to the Ashram. Siva noticed his presence in the Bhajan Hall during the morning class.

'What for have you come here? How long do you want to stay?'

'I have come here to become a Sannyasin, Swamiji. I shall stay here permanently."

'You? Sannyasa? What for? You think that if you take Sannyasa, you can have a comfortable living, free food and clothing? You wish to eat without work? Otherwise, why have you come here? You are afraid that you will not be able to earn your livelihood by working in some office. And, you imagine that you can deceive the world by taking upon yourself the robes of a Sannyasin and expecting the world to feed your laziness. Go back: do some service somewhere: earn your livelihood by honest means: then practise Sadhana side by side. You will get Moksha rapidly.'

REVITALISATION IN A FEW SECONDS

In the morning class, Sri Vishnuji demonstrated Bhastrika and also explained the technique. Siva said:

This Pranayama is a great help to Sadhakas. It has innumerable advantages. The mind will be more easily concentrated during meditation if you sit after one or two rounds of Bhastrika. You can effectively drive off sleep and drowsiness during meditation

with the help of this Pranayama. No tea or coffee is necessary. Lungs get thoroughly exercised and flushed. This Pranayama is a sure remedy for asthma. It increases the gastric fire, too. Digestion is improved. In a few moments, the entire body and mind are revitalised. In cold places, even if you have no blankets, practise a few vigorous rounds of Bhastrika. You will be comfortable. The Pranayama will produce warmth in the body. Padmasana is the best Asana for practising Bhastrika and Kapalabhati.

This is very much like Kapalabhati. In Kapalabhati, breathing is automatically controlled by the pressure and relaxation of abdominal muscles. When the belly is drawn in, the diaphragm is thrown up and the lungs will automatically throw out the breath: similarly, when the abdominal pressure is relaxed, the diaphragm will descend, thus creating a vacuum in the lungs and automatically, the breath is taken in. There is no particular attention paid to breathing and hence, it is more diaphragmatic exercise. But, in Bhastrika, besides the abdominal muscles, attention is also paid to breathing. Forced expulsions of breath characterise this Pranayama. The nostrils and the entire bronchial tube as also the lungs are vigorously cleansed. Here, special attention is paid to Rechaka alone: Puraka becomes an inevitable corollary. Puraka should be mild, short and automatic and just that much of breath is taken as would be sufficient for the next forcible expulsion. At the end, Bhastrika has a long, mild and full Puraka followed by a long Kumbhaka and then a full Rechaka. In Bhastrika, the maximum number of expulsions per round is 20 and a Sadhaka is advised to do only three rounds per sitting. There should be a clear interval between two rounds. In Kapalabhati, the expulsions can go up to a maximum of 100 at a time.

'All of you should make it a point whenever you meet an asthmatic, to teach this Pranayama (Bhastrika) to him.

You will be rendering a great service. You should teach this Pranayama to all those with whom you come into contact.'

21st JANUARY, 1949

FIRST AID TO THE INJURED

The Sanskrit class was over in morning at the Forest University.

Siva began his Kirtan: but, curiously enough, it was Jaya Ganesha Kirtan!

From this morning,' said Siva: 'we should have a First Aid Section in the University. Everybody should have a working knowledge of this most important branch of knowledge. When a man has cut his arm accidentally and he is bleeding profusely, a Sadhaka should not be standing near-by, gaping like a fool. He should at once rush to the aid of the injured. Without proper knowledge, he will be able to do nothing. If he has knowledge of First Aid, he will at once be able to stop the bleeding and thus save the patient.

'First of all, this knowledge will be very useful to yourself. The body is an instrument provided by the Lord to enable the Jiva to achieve the goal of realising its unity with the Paramatman. It should be looked after well. Then only will the path be smooth. Diseases are obstacles to Sadhana. Everyone should, therefore, have a fair knowledge of simple remedies to ordinary diseases, besides First Aid. First Aid will enable you to know exactly what to do if a snake bit you or a wasp stung you. It is a great help to the Sadhaka himself.

'Secondly, you will always have your neighbours and friends. Even a renunciate Sanyasin cannot avoid having the acquaintance of one or two others. Food is necessary: clothing is necessary. Man is a social being. When your neighbour meets with an

accident, you should not just stand there looking at him: you should at once render First Aid to him and thus relieve him of his suffering. There is no service greater than this.'

Thirdly, this branch of knowledge is the basis for a system of Yoga which effects the necessary purification for the dawn of Knowledge. Unless the Antahkarana is purified, the Light of God cannot shine in it. There is no greater purifying agency than helping a man out of pain. You will have to serve the patient with Narayana Bhava or Atma Bhava. Then, the inner purification will be rapid.

'If a man has accidentally drowned himself, you should give him artificial respiration. You should learn the technique of getting the water out of the lungs and restoring the breathing. Normal breathing may not sometimes be resumed until after a few hours. You should go on persistently applying the artificial respiration.

'Even before that, you should know how to rescue a patient who is about to be drowned. If you do not know how to swim, you should throw a rope or a piece of cloth with the help of which the drowning man may reach the shore. Similarly, you should know what to do when a man is suffering from asphyxia.

ads Then there are cases of snake-bite, scorpion-sting, etc. You should have presence of mind. You should be able to find out whether the snake was a poisonous one or not, from the wound. If it is non-poisonous, you should be able to restore courage to the patient, by gently telling him that nothing will happen to him. More cases die of shock than of any actual causes.

Then there are cases of poisoning. You should know what sort of emetics should be given or purgatives and antidotes. Millions of lives can be saved by timely help. Just imagine what a great help you will be to humanity!

'You should be able to attend to fractures and dislocations of bones. You should always use your commonsense. If the usual ready-made material is not available, you should rapidly improvise a splint by cutting pieces of thick card-board etc.

'In the case of broken arteries or veins, you should know that bleeding from arteries will be in jerks and the blood will be of red colour and can be stopped by applying a bandage between the place and the heart. Bleeding from the veins will be of dark hue and will simply ooze out. If the bleeding is not immediately stopped, the patient will have a collapse very soon. You should know how to apply the triangular bandage.

'In the case of cuts and wounds, you should know how to bandage them. You should know the use of tincture benzoine: this acts as a plaster on the wounds when applied over some cotton-padding. If the plaster gets stuck up, you should use spirit to remove it. You should also be able to treat cases of burnt or blistered, skin, scratches, abrasion, etc.

You should be ever prepared to rush to the aid of persons injured by accidents-car accident or tonga accident.

'You should know the methods of removing foreign matter which might have got into the ear, the nose or the eyes.

'Lastly, you should be able to treat cases of fatigue, fainting, shock and other forms of sudden collapse. In all these cases, if proper First Aid treatment is rendered in time, the patient has every chance to revive. If this treatment is neglected, then the patient's condition gets worse.

'You will, by now, have realised how very useful this science is. Every Sadhaka should have a thorough knowledge of First Aid, and some working knowledge of medicines, of household remedies, of hygiene and sanitation. He will not only help himself

but help others and thus purify himself for the reception of divine light."

PRAYER FOR SELF IN OTHERS

At the close of the morning University class, Siva announced that the entire class will repeat the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra for the health and long life of Dr. Hetram Agarwal and family.

You may ask: why should we pray for the health and long life of other people, when we ourselves are trying to say that this world is a long dream, that the body and the other Koshas are imaginary coverings over the Eternal Atman which alone IS. These questions arise out of mere intellectual perversity. If it is, of course, your aim to become Jivanmukthas now and here, and after shuffling off this body, to become Videhamukthas, and even then, so long as you are in this relative plane and not ever merged in the Absolute, you should also take into consideration the relative reality of this world. The world exists as an illusion. In this illusory play, you have to act your part efficiently and well, according to Dharma.

Secondly, as the Lord has said in the third chapter of the Gita, there is mutual dependence between the Devas and the men. When the Devas are pleased, they help men, who in their turn, offer Yajnas to the Devas. Similarly, in the world too. You cannot isolate yourself from the world, altogether: you cannot sit idly and expect to be looked after by the world. If you rise above all care for the body, then you can afford to ignore the world. Not till then. If you serve the people, the people will look after you. Therefore, from this point of view also, such prayer is essential.

Thirdly, your aim is to realise that the same Atman, the same Satchidananda Brahman pervades the entire creation and is beyond that also. Sadhana should be a continuous process of expansion of the heart. When you pray for others, feel that you

are praying for your own Self in them. By continuously dwelling on this Truth, you will soon realise the All-pervading Self."

ASHRAMS: INDISPENSABLE NEED

The First Aid class in the morning gave rise to a discussion after the class was over. Siva wanted that an examination should also be held in due course to qualify students for a Seva Yoga Certificate to be issued by the Forest University.

'Everyone who comes here should be put through a rapid First Aid training. Even if he goes away, later on, he will prove a real aspirant wherever he may be and his knowledge of First Aid will be of great help to himself and to humanity at large.

'Why: everything that the Lord has provided in this Ashram has a great significance in a Sadhaka's life. The library, the temple, the Bhajan Hall, the dispensary, the office and lastly, the dense forest behind: all these put together constitute the best locality for practising intense Sadhana. You can render service at the dispensary: you can do some work in the office and the kitchen: you can do Akhanda Kirtan: you can worship in the temple: you can study in the library, and then, when you feel like it, you can seclude yourself in the jungle.

'Whatever you need, you get here. You have been placed above wants by the Lord Himself. Elsewhere, you will have to suffer for want of proper food and creature comforts. If you wish to read a book, you will have to hunt for it in many libraries. Here, the Society will order the book for you. Elsewhere, if you need a langotee, you will have to run round a dozen rich men: even then they will say: You are a Sadhu: why do you need a langotee? Those days are gone when the kings themselves used to look after Sannyasins. Now, everywhere materialism has spread. It is a very bad time for Sannyasins and Sadhus. But, God will help them. Parivrajaka life is not good nowadays. As the Sadhu will be

woefully neglected, he will have always to be thinking: of food, clothing and other necessities of life.

There should be established Ashrams all over the country where renunciates can live and evolve.

'Occasionally, Sadhakas may go out on Parivrajaka life. They should not be prevented by public institutions or Government from doing so. But, the Government may insist on their having with them an identity card from a recognised spiritual leader. Thus, the ancient order will be protected: and no one will have any misgivings about the wandering Sadhu."

AWAKENING OF KUNDALINI

Siva had paid a visit to Sri S's room after the class was over in the morning. S. was still in bed fast asleep. Siva's Pranava Dhwani woke him up. Later in the day, Siva remarked:

'S! I think your Kundalini needs awakening by a new and special kind of Tadana Kriya! I should take a small stick and give a few good Tadanas so that the Shakti in you may get awakened. You are so young and yet so lazy. I have requested you so often to attend the class: you never care to listen. Even though you are in the next room, you do not attend the Kirtan in the office. You are slowly becoming a Thahappan Swami, I think.' (Thahappan Swami is a humorous way of saying 'an indisciplined and disobedient disciple'.)

And, then turning to us, Siva said: There are various methods of awakening Kundalini: through Hatha Yogic Kriyas, through Pranayama, through Vichara, through Guru's grace, through devotion, through selfless service, etc. There is a special Shakti Sanchara Kriya, a Tadana Kriya. This method of Tadana has a special value. My Tadana Kriya is an entirely new method. It

consists of taking a good stick and giving a few mild canings. Then Kundalini will get awakened and the aspirant will be brisk.'

RECIPE FOR PEACE

Chidanandaji was coming down after night Kirtan, along with Siva. Siva noticed this unusual feature and enquired of the reason.

'Nowadays, Swamiji, I am taking my bed down."

This is after he took over as the General Secretary of the Society.

'Why?'

'Much of the misunderstanding and ill-will among people has its origin in the kitchen, Swamiji. I spend most of my time in or near the kitchen nowadays so as to be on the spot to smoothen out matters.

This moved the all-compassionate Siva. No, no, Chidanandaji, do not worry yourself over these things. Kitchen is a tiresome business. You will waste all your precious energies on silly things. No, no: do not come down. Just supervise the work for a few minutes daily. You should go on with your meditation, study and other things. I myself have experience of the kitchen-politics. But I am indifferent. God's will be done. If He wants, then people will remain here: otherwise, not.

I am always peaceful. Because, I am prepared for anything. If all people go away, I will take my Bhiksha in the Kshetra or in some houses here and remain in a Kutir. I will serve the few sick patients that come to me. If some devotee would like to print, I will give him some of my writings. Rest of the time will be my own. If just two or three hundred rupees come every month, then I will keep a few hard-working Sadhakas and run the show on a small scale. If lakhs and crores come, then I am prepared to expand the work to any magnitude. I am prepared for anything. So, I am always peaceful. You should also be indifferent to these

things. From tomorrow, remain in your Kutir and just supervise the work. Do not bother yourself always about finance and kitchen."

Peace and courage have their origin in renunciation.

GO YE! AND SIN NO MORE!

As we were coming down after night Satsang, a discussion arose about discipline and Sannyasa. Chidanandaji quoted several instances of Sannyasins quarrelling with their own Gurus or with others.

Sannyasa is not an easy thing,' said Siva. I think in Sannyasa-life, too, we shall see all the Lilas that characterise worldly life: fights and quarrels, jealousy and hatred, passion and greed. Many Sannyasins have gone back to household life after they had embraced Sannyasa. They had all taken Sannyasa perhaps before they were fit for it. Some of them have again come back to a life of renunciation and thenceforward have been very good Sadhus, Sri K. who started the Satyasevashrama was one such. Evil is there inside; man has got to be vigilant and to exert always to annihilate it. Sometimes this evil overpowers him: he goes astray. Then he wakes up again and comes back to the proper path. It is all His Maya. We should not condemn anything. The moment the Sadhu who is a Yoga-Bhrashta comes back to the proper path, the Lord takes him back with open arms and leads him on the right path. Only, he should not relapse into evil ways."

A significant point in this connection is that the above is the answer to an unasked question from me. In the afternoon, Swami Krishnanandaji and I were discussing this very problem and were unable to arrive at a proper conclusion. It was of no great moment: so I did not broach the matter before Siva: but, the answer has come all the same.

22nd JANUARY, 1949

TYPEWRITERS IN A JUNGLE

The Commissioner of Paori has come with Sri Gauri Prasadji and the Mahant of Swarg Ashram.

After bowing to Siva, he occupied the chair opposite. Siva at once called Vishnuji and Padmanabhan. One brought fruits and the other brought books for presentation. Ever ready to serve!

Within a few minutes, the visitors had their Prasad, for their body and soul, Siva asked them while handing over the Asana-chart: Will you practise them?"

'Sure: Yes, Swamiji. I shall try.' Then a few minutes later, the Commissioner turned towards the office. He was astonished,

This is your office?'

Judge Saheb explained: Yes, it is Swamiji's office. You see, it is here that the innumerable books, magazines, pamphlets and leaflets, and letters are produced. Swamiji has flooded the world with spiritual literature."

30th JANUARY, 1949

THAT LOOPHOLE

Siva is not a revolutionary. He understands that perfection is not attained in a day. He does not want anyone to break his habits all of a sudden. He does not advise anyone to jump from luxury into Virakti.

He is an evolutionary. He would not allow one Sadhaka to go on repeating from day to day the same old acts, without even TRYING to alter his attitude towards life and striving to change his habits.

Early in the morning, before even coming into the office, Siva entered the bath-room. He found a few younger Sadhakas waiting for hot water for bath, along with more aged inmates.

Just a mere smile, an 'OM Namo Narayanaya' and 'You are also taking bath in hot water?', indicated to the young Sadhaka that a good invigorating and healthy plunge bath in the Ganges would do him good. A short sermon!

FEBRUARY, 1949

6th FEBRUARY, 1949

MRS. CHAKRAVARTHY PASSES INTO SIVA

The bell goes, announcing that the mid-day meal is ready. With Kirtan and Santi Patha, the office work is closed down for the morning. Siva followed us to the dining hall.

'All of you should sing the Maha Mantra today for fifteen minutes before food is served. Today Sri Rajani Mohan Chakravarthy is performing the Sraddha of his departed wife: let us all pray for the peace of the departed soul.'

This was done.

What a beautiful soul. Sri Rajani Babu is a great devotee of Siva: and his wife was indeed a thrice-blessed lady. Just see what he has written to Siva about the lady's last hour:

'At about 4:50 a.m., I was alone sitting at her head and praying. I had a vision of your good self (Swami Sivananda) appearing before me and I placed her at your feet and then she peacefully passed away. So I know that you have given her shelter in thy lotus feet. I am satisfied.'

In Brahmamuhurtha, with her husband at her bedside and the visible divine presence of Siva, the lady merges herself in Siva, becomes one with her Guru. What more can blessedness be?

What is the attitude of the husband?

I think it is the will of the Lord to free me from worldly attachments, so that I may devote more time to His service.

You know best. I am resigned to thy will.'

To a man of such self-surrender belongs Siva's infinite grace, the grace that ennobles, divinises and bestows immortality. Glory to Siva! Glory to Rajani Babu!

9th FEBRUARY, 1949

THE ADEPT'S DIAGNOSIS

Vishnuji's eyes were red. Siva noticed this the moment he came into the office in the afternoon.

'Oh Vishnuswamiji, why are your eyes red?'

Vishnuji was silent.

'Ohji, don't do Trataka too much', Siva said. 'It is due to an overdose of Trataka, is it not?'

Yes, Swamiji.'

'Be moderate. There is no fun in overdoing these exercises and spoiling the eyes. Apply boric lotion to the eyes.'

11th FEBRUARY, 1949

ALERT AND APPRECIATIVE

On his way to the office, Siva peeped into the Ayurvedic Pharmacy. Master Satchidanandaji, an expert Ayurveda Acharya, was busy in the preparation of Chyavanaprash. Siva personally examined the progress of the preparation, the materials kept for the Chyavanaprash, the vessels, etc., and satisfied himself that they were all hygienic, and good. He remarked to a senior disciple standing near him:

'Satchidanandaji is an expert: and he puts all his heart and soul into the work. His are the best preparations of Ayurvedic medicines. Many have expressed their great appreciation of the quality of the medicines. Hundreds have already written to say

that they found immediate relief from the use of these preparations.

'I know all this. And, we should pay a visit to this department once in a way. We should check the stock and verify the accounts. Satchidanandaji is ever so busy with his work: a pilferer as a servant could well make a fortune here. If we neglect this, then we shall indirectly be encouraging pilfering.

'Moreover, when some of us come here occasionally and say kind and encouraging words to Satchidanandaji and others here, they will be greatly enthused and will work more vigorously. They will not feel neglected.'

Siva left the A.P. after doing Kirtan of Lord Dhanwantari and the Aswini Devatas. Satchidanandaji's joy knew no bounds.

BEWARE OF UNFULFILLED DESIRES

Sivaratri is approaching. Candidates for Sannyasa have slowly begun to be mentioned. There is already a list of six. In that connection, Venkatachala Madi's name was proposed. Quickly Siva remarked:

'Not yet. He does not know what it is to suffer from indigestion after overeating laddus. Let him wait.'

Words of wisdom, these! If a man who has many worldly desires and yet embraces the holy order of Sannyasa without having had a chance of fulfilling them, he will soon have a downfall, if he is unable to sublimate those desires. Few have the courage, the will and the capacity to sublimate desires. The others ought to think a hundred times before embracing Sannyasa. Sannyasa is made of much sterner stuff than people generally take it to be. Renunciation of all the pleasures of the three planes of existence-that is Sannyasa. He, who is not prepared for this, ought not to taint the glorious order by prematurely taking the robes on.

Does Siva then mean that only old people should take Sannyasa? No: but...

OFFER HIM A FRAGRANT FLOWER

Another name was Sri Vishnuji's and Siva readily agreed to include his name in the list.

'Such young men of courage and bravery should come forward and embrace Sannyasa. What do old men, just about to die, gain by being initiated into Sannyasa? What have they to renounce? Their senses are already dead. What have they to control? Is it much too difficult for a man of seventy-five to be a Brahmachari? Should a blind man be told not to look at ladies? Of course, it is better than no Sannyasa at all.

That is only second-rate. The first grade Sannyasins are the young and vigorous ones like Vishnuji. They can live an active self-controlled life and show to the world the glory of renunciation. The flower must be offered to the Lord when it is full and fragrant: not when it has faded.'

UTILITARIAN GURU BHAKTI

The topic then drifted to the case of the disciples who vilify their Guru: and the point was made that unless the Sadhaka showed strong and unshakable faith in and devotion to Siva and his mission, he should not be initiated by Siva himself: for, if this man later turns out to be a black-sheep and vilifies his own Guru, the situation will be awkward. To Siva, all this was foreign, and in a merely jocular vein he replied:

'But, when this man goes to the Kshetra and the Kothari there asks for his antecedents, he would emphatically declare that he is the disciple of the great Yogi Sivananda.' All joined in the mirth.

SIVANANDA BHAKTAS GET SPECIAL TREATMENT

Here is Sri Ramanathan of Allahabad, a very good devotee of Siva, who has tasted the nectar that flows from devotion to Siva. He writes:

'I do not know whether you have heard of His Holiness Paramasanta Dr. Chaturbhuja Sahai of Etah. He seems to have great regard for your revered self. He usually comes to Allahabad on the occasion of Basant Panchami and lectures at two or three places. This year he refused all lecture engagements because he said that people simply came to the meetings but never practised what he advised them to do. He made an exception in the case of the Divine Life Society, Allahabad, as you will see from the programme enclosed. The reason given by him for accepting this engagement was that we are all Sivananda-Bhaktas.'

A NOVEL REASON

The Principal of the Bharat Mandir High School met Siva.

Swamiji, I have something very interesting to tell you. I advertised a teacher's post in the High School which has now fallen vacant. I received hundreds of applications from highly qualified candidates. Believe me: almost every application contained the plea that the applicant selects this High School for he wants to be near Swami Sivananda. It is very strange how your fame and spiritual influence have spread so far and wide and how it makes everyone eager to be near you and get your spiritual instructions in person.

Siva conveniently smiled away the remarks and said: It is all His Grace.'

THE GREATEST UNIVERSITY IN THE WORLD

A visitor was attracted by the signboard Yoga-Vedanta Forest University'. He attended one of its morning classes. He

approached Siva thoughtfully and asked: 'Swamiji, you have called this a University. But, I see very few students here.'

Siva at once understood the visitor's difficulty. This is not a University like the others in the world. People are not trained here to become clerks, advocate and scientists. Humanity has nowadays so bemeaned itself that people everywhere want only sense-pleasures: they have no idea of Yoga and Vedanta, or the Supreme Bliss that they will enjoy out of Atma Jnana. In such a topsy-turvy world, it is a great thing to have even one good Sadhaka bent on renouncing worldly pleasures and striving to attain the goal of life-God-realisation-through the practice of Yoga. That there are even a dozen students earnestly endeavouring to realise the Truth in the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University is a great achievement: that qualifies the University to be called the greatest university in the world'.

You are perfectly right. Swamiji. How can we apply the worldly measure to spiritual things?'

(The University has been re-named Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy since 1958.)

16th FEBRUARY, 1949

REFUGE OF RUNAWAYS?

The postman brings a telegram. It is placed before Siva. Let us see what it is: 'Hem fled last night. If arrived, inform and stop him. Karnua, Gauhati.

We all had our hearty laugh, and silently congratulated our latest brother on his brave action. One more boy is fired with Vairagya, and has given the parting kick to worldliness.

It is very significant: the parent of every spiritually- minded boy missing from the house almost instinctively wires to 'Swami Sivananda'!

I think many fathers and mothers would be scolding me to their hearts' content. But, what am I to do? Let them stop the boys if they can. When Vairagya dawns, no one can prevent a boy from running away from home. Each man's Prarabdha is his own: no one can prevent its working out."

Surely: when this spiritual Prarabdha is backed up nicely by stirring and often revolutionary call to arms against Samsara, when the combustible spiritual Samskara filled aspirant's heart is brought near the fire of Siva's writings, it at once catches fire. No one can help it.

17th FEBRUARY, 1949

AVINASHANANDA

Sri Swami Avinashanandaji Maharaj, one of the senior monks of the Ramakrishna Mission, paid a visit to the Ashram.

From Kankhal, the Swami had written to Siva that he intended to come to the Ashram to have Siva's Darshan. I have been closely watching the rapid expansion of your selfless mission', he wrote.

Siva had met Swami A. nearly 25 years ago, when, along with Pt. Chand Narayan Harkuli, Siva visited Madras en route to Rameshwaram. The pilgrims had stayed at Madras for a couple of days, as it happened to be the time of the Theosophical Convention at Madras. During their stay there, they paid a visit to the Ramakrishna Mission at Mylapore, and there met Sri Swami A.

The Swami had a long conversation with Siva, during which he expressed his personal admiration of Siva's work and the Divine Life Society's mission. Particularly, the Akhanda Maha Mantra Kirtan at the Bhajan Hall, that has been going on for several years now is a remarkable idea. Swamiji, why don't you have a similar Akhanda Gita Patha?'

"You have echoed my own wish. I have been thinking of it for a considerable time now. Once I gave it a push also: and we had Akhanda Gita Patha for fifteen days. Lack of men and finance came in the way. Thank you: I shall certainly bear it in mind and put the scheme into operation the moment conditions are favourable.'

Siva entertained Swami A. and party nicely at his own Kutir. They were all highly pleased.

22nd FEBRUARY, 1949

SIVA'S WORK WAITS FOR NONE

For, Siva knows that Time and tide wait for none'. What comes to the mind, if it is a Satsankalpa, should be done at once.

The fencing of Siva's Kutir verandah is over. At the spot where Siva usually sits during the summer evening Satsang on the Ganges bank, a cement back-rest has been constructed. Siva noticed this: at once he began to sing his usual Ganesha Kirtans.

He distributed some food to the fish in the Ganges, extra today.

'Oh Shraddhananda Swamiji, please give these coolies some food today. Who is there, on the Ganges bank? Oh Venkatesanandaji....' I ran up to the spot.

Take some Prasad now.'

'Swamiji, I have already taken food.'

It does not matter. You should be able to digest. Come in.'

Shraddhanandaji is made in the same mould as the master: he quietly distributed food to the coolies and me, without a thought about himself.

Thus was celebrated the opening ceremony of the Open Air Summer Satsang Bhavan in Siva's Kutir, with all the formalities of Kirtan and feast!

Oh Siva! Great is the power of Thy Sankalpa.

SIVANANDA SANGEETA KALA MANDIR

Swami Sivaswaroopji, a talented musician with poetic abilities, is composing Hindi poems embodying in themselves the life and teachings of Siva. Some of us had a desire to learn the tune of these poems from the author himself. So, we had requested S. to teach us those songs. As a preliminary, he had started teaching us the rudiments of music. This has been going on for the past few days.

Someone told Siva of this. And, this conversation took place just opposite the Siva Kutir where we used to assemble in the morning for the music lesson.

Is that so?" asked Siva: and without moving an inch forward, he began his inaugural Jaya Ganesha Kirtans, Thus, in reality came into being the Sivananda Sangeeta Kala Mandir.

We marvelled at Siva's insistence that all undertakings, however small or great, should be commenced with a prayer to the Lord-first Ganesha, then Saraswathi, then Guru and lastly the Lord as Rama and Krishna. Without this, there is no function in Ananda Kutir: and Siva carries on this practice even when he attends public meetings elsewhere, whether the public asks for the Kirtan or not.

24th FEBRUARY, 1949

GLORY OF SANNYASA

A pious social worker was somehow upset by certain young aspirant-Sannyasins going astray. He had heard many stories of

such misconduct on the part of Sannyasins from the Rishikesh public. What struck him as unique was the fact that in Siva's Ashram almost all the Sannyasins were young and youthful.

'Swamiji, pardon my presumption. But, would it not have been better for these people to wait for some time more before embracing this holy order which is so very difficult to stick to? Are you sure that these young initiates have really understood the duties of this Ashram, and that they will adhere to the principles? I should think it is a great mistake to initiate them so early.'

Siva laughed gently. 'Why! I myself can give you many examples of this type. One young man took Sannyasa. He was a great Vairagi. His exemplary life made his brother also to take Sannyasa. Later on, his (the former's) dispassion waned. He married, ate eggs, and meat. His brother, however, stuck to the line. The former did not live with his Guru: he had his own Manmukhi (whimsical) Sadhana. He did not protect himself in seclusion by Satsang. Another young Sannyasi was fiery in his Sadhana. He inspired and elevated many Sadhakas. Later on he married and has a child. How did this happen? He freely mixed with householders. He allowed ladies to shampoo his legs. He had a downfall, brought forth a child. There are many such instances.'

That is exactly what I mean, Swamiji. In that case, is it not better not to give Sannyas to young people at all?'

'My dear Bhagatji, that is where you are mistaken. They might fall and rise again. Yet, they are worthy of your veneration. For, at least one day they were Sannyasins. They had the courage to throw up their hands and say: 'I renounce the pleasures of the three worlds.' How glorious is Sannyasa! How glorious is such renunciation of the pleasures of the three worlds!

They had the boldness and daring to stand up against the greatest forces of nature, the forces that maintain this Samsara-those of

self-preservation and procreation. They stand there as the masters of nature: you are mercilessly driven by these forces whose slave you are. May be, some renunciates do not properly assess the strength of these opposing forces. They are sometimes taken unawares, when they are a little heedless. But those who never renounce, for fear of having a downfall are cowardly, and they never know what it is to renounce all. They never look at the battle-field lest their nose should be injured. They jest at scars that never felt a wound. But a brave warrior wears these scars as ornaments, for those scars taught him to protect himself in battle.

'Churchills are required in Sannyasa. Brave, courageous even in the face of successive defeats, Sannyasins should learn lessons and pin their faith in 'ultimate victory'. Sure, victory will be theirs if only they persist, persevere and plod on, without yielding midway. Let the light of God shine brightly in the heart: protect that faith and tenacious adherence to the Lotus Feet of the Lord. Storms of passions will sweep the externals: and when God's grace descends on the Sadhaka, everything will be quiet and tranquil. Glory, glory to Sannyasa and Sadhana.

'Sadhakas should learn a lesson from these stories. They should be vigilant, cautious. There is no need to lose heart. But, each such episode ought to re-awaken in the young Sannyasin a love for seclusion, for Satsang with his own Guru. Sadhakas should never drift away from their Guru. They should plunge themselves in Sadhana and endeavour to realise God, every moment of their life.

A wise man profits himself by others' experience: a middling by his own: a fool by neither. The story of others' downfall ought not to dishearten you. But, on the contrary, it should teach you a lesson. It should put you on your guard.' And, you should uphold the glory of Sannyasa. Because one man has failed to live up to

Sannyasa, you should not think that the Order itself is unsuitable for the youth.

'What about the names of great Sannyasins like Swami Vivekananda, Swami Rama Tirtha, Swami Dayananda, Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi? As a matter of fact, you find that most of the noteworthy Sannyasins renounced the world while yet they were youthful. What can an old man achieve? When the power of hearing has gone, what Sravana is he going to do? No Sadhana will be possible for the old man. It is mock-Sannyasa if he embraces the Holy Order. Sannyasa would then become a formality. Further, conditions are such these days that an old man finds himself inextricably entangled in family life. Therefore, it is essential that young boys should renounce the world and embrace Sannyasa. They have fewer worldly ties.

It was because perfectly or imperfectly man has striven to live, to exist, that we find today that he has survived when countless other species have perished and gone. Similarly, it is because young men or old felt disgust for worldly life and embraced Sannyasa whether they have later been able to rise to eminence or have been the victims of animal nature, that today that glorious Order has survived.

Young Sannyasins should keep themselves ever busy in Japa, Kirtan, Swadhyaya, meditation and Vichara: they should live in the company of their Guru and practise vigorous Sadhana. They should never enter the cities. Even if they have to pass through a city, they should, as far as possible, avoid the crowd. Seclusion is the key to successful Sannyasa-life. I have always advised my disciples never to enter the plains: and even if they have to do so owing to the exigencies of selfless service, I ask them to finish their work quickly and run back to their Himalayan abode. The Himalayas are the homes of Sadhakas and Sannyasins. A Sannyasin is safe so long as he is there. Sannyasa was born in the

Himalayas: Sannyasa lives and will ever live in the Himalayas alone.'

EQUAL VISION

A South Indian typical Iyengar is a welcome guest to the Ashram today. A fairly imposing personality, with his chest literally covered with rosaries of every conceivable kind, a beard which bespoke of his ascetic tendencies, and a more or less renunciate grade, the tuft, and the traditional way of wearing the Dhoti, as well as the peculiar bag (Madi-Sanchi) singing the praise of the Brahmin's orthodoxy in chorus with his Dwadasha-Urdhwapundram or twelve caste-marks of U shape.

He heard Tamil being spoken in far-off Himalayas: his ears that had been starved of this received the divine elixir. Without further ado, he entered the Ashram, and introduced himself with a couple of hymns in praise of Sannyasa.

Siva very kindly enquired about him.

Swamiji, I am on a pilgrimage. I have experienced untold difficulties as I do not know Hindi. When I heard Tamil being spoken here, I greatly rejoiced and feel much relieved. Yesterday was Ekadashi and I could not take anything in Hardwar.....

Siva quickly interrupted him, and asked a few Ashramites to rush to the kitchen and bring something to eat. In the meantime, the Brahmin was seated on the D.J. Hall verandah. Whatever the Ashramites brought from the kitchen fell short of Siva's expectation of hospitality: sweets, fruits, milk, curd, fruit-juice, the old Brahmin was beside himself in gratitude.

Later, Siva listened to the old man's oration and recitations.

After he had left the place, Siva remarked: To achieve Adwaita Bhavana of Samadrishti is not an easy thing. First of all, we should feel the same way towards a visitor, whoever he may be,

as we would say if a member of your Purvashrama family comes, or an intimate friend comes. We should not disregard a person just because he is an unknown stranger."

Even this is very rare in this world. When all is said and done, a Marathi likes a Marathi (Marathi?) more than anyone else, a Bengali likes a Bengali, a Madrassi likes a Madrassi. Look at the exhilaration that the old Brahmin felt when he heard Tamil at the Ashram. This sectarianism creeps even into spiritual life. The very fact that Siva's disciples are spread over the entire world, and even his Ashram has housed people of all sects, classes and nationalities is proof positive of the catholicity of Siva's heart.

Siva then spoke admiringly of the Brahmin's recitations. Mark Siva's tolerant understanding of the various paths adopted by Sadhakas.

Like this Bhagatji, we should have a section. We should have Avadhutas of Pranavanandaji's type. At one place, there should be only Jnanis. At another, we should have Hatha Yogis. At a third, one very busy Karma Yogins. At a fourth, only Bhaktas with musical instruments always singing the Lord's names. Ladies and children should have their own Ashram. One Ashram, like this, should be a modern one where the Sannyasins will use table, chair, typewriter, radio, photographic equipment and cars. At another, only Avadhuta Sannyasins: and then orthodox type Sannyasins, squatting on a mat with only a Kamandalu by their side. The entire India should be represented in one Ashram, with all these sections.' A grand idea!

Visitors to Ananda Kutir, who have cared to watch this wonderful phenomenon, are aware that this idea of Siva has already been worked out by him in a miniature scale in Sivanandashram itself.

25th FEBRUARY, 1949

SIVARATRI

The great day has at last arrived. Preparations are afoot for the initiation of seven youngsters into Sannyasa. Today it is especially cold, much colder than the previous days. On the verandah of Siva's Kutir are assembled the aspirants for Sannyasa, their muscles active, trying to generate heat!

Siva came out of his Kutir. He has not been keeping quite well for the last few days. Yet, along with the Sadhakas, Siva, too, took a few dips in the icy-cold Ganges. The youngsters looked on with astonishment: and drew much inspiration from Siva, which sustained them for one inevitable dip in the Ganges.

The Akhanda Kirtan at night needed a little more spirit: and Siva stepped in timely and his very presence in the temple till the early hours of the next morning kept all wide awake and in a very meditative mood. The ease with which he keeps awake, is indeed a marvel. For, whereas others have to shout, walk, clap the hands, dance, etc., to keep themselves awake, Siva just sits still, motionless, singing the Kirtan, occasionally throwing up a glance at the Lord (very much to suggest that He needs it), and quickly surveying the devotees all round.

When Siva found that some people were preparing themselves to sleep, he came into the temple and said:

'What about the individual Abhisheka by all?'

'We can have it during the last quarter, Swamiji.'

'No, no: have it now. Some people are already sleepy.

They will go away a little later. They should not miss the chance.'

What consideration, even for the apparently undeserving!

Next afternoon (on the 26th), Siva noticed our eyes red and gloomy, and could readily see that we had been a victim of sleep.

I think, you did not even take food in the afternoon?

After all, nature gets her dues, with compound interest!'

'Yes, Swamiji.' How true!

'But, somehow, I am unable to get sleep even if I try to sleep.'

Obviously: for these lower Tamasic forces of nature have no operation in the regions where dwells our Siva.

27th FEBRUARY, 1949

MOTHER, HOW POWERFUL YOU ARE!

The aftermath of Sivaratri night's vigil has been characterised by an inordinate attachment to the dear blanket which lies heavily yet so very comfortably on some of the Ashramites that they are unable and unwilling to discard it. Beyond the four walls of the Kutir whizzes past the winter wind. Sailing along with it, yet more powerful than it, inspiring and awakening, is a Pranava-Dhwani. The Ashramite, gently awakened to the world he is living in, listens. Again, OM!....This time a little louder. The blanket flies: and blinking eyes peep through the door. Yes: it is Siva.

'Come: get up. Come to the class.'

Mark the process well. A very important lesson should not escape our notice. A sleeping man should be gently awakened, without giving him the least 'shock'. Many people have this bad habit of violently shaking another person in order to wake him up, or of shouting aloud while another is asleep. This practice causes nervousness in the person thus awakened, and should, therefore, be scrupulously avoided. The Life Force that had withdrawn itself into the core of the heart should be allowed to resume its position all through the body, gently, gradually and gracefully, as it does when withdrawing itself from the limbs.

Let us resume the narrative. Thus, from room to room goes Siva, waking up each individual. Then everyone assembles in the Hall and the class commences.

FORCE OF HABIT

Siva later explained: 'Man is a bundle of habits. Life goes smoothly on so long as good, healthy and virtuous habits have been cultivated, and are adhered to. The mischievous mind is ever watching for an opportunity to slip back into its old grooves of lethargy, ease and comfort. A day's slackening of effort is sufficient for the mind to work its own havoc. It takes a long time to cultivate a good habit: but only a moment to break it. If today you sleep during Brahmamuhurtha, tomorrow will naturally be a repetition of today and so it will go from bad to worse, and in due course, you would have gone right back to the good old days when the warm rays of the sun used to greet you out of bed.'

Precious piece of advice which applies to all aspects of Sadhana!

28th FEBRUARY, 1949

PSEUDO-GURUS

A very enterprising young gentleman poses himself as a rationalist Guru of highly intellectual persons whom he advises to think for themselves. Day in and day out he lectures, talks, and discourses upon this philosophy, forgetting all the while that his main theme is to let the other man think for himself. He is their Guru to teach them not to believe in Gurus. He has his own brand of followers who support him and cry hoarse his creed against organisations.

Siva heard about this misguided young man, who has undertaken the task of guiding others. The old Sankara was awakened in him. Perhaps, he suddenly remembered that he, too, belonged to the glorious order of Sankaracharya who defeated Pundits, Karma

Khandis and materialists. Siva, the Prativadi Bhayankara, at once wrote out the following poem:

Some teachers mislead their aspirants.

They do not understand the level of the students.

They preach high philosophy to all.

They condemn Japa, Sankirtan, study of sacred scriptures.

They say unto all:

Think for yourself: don't depend

Upon authority of books. Prasthanatraya.

Do not surrender yourself to any Guru,

There is nothing in the books.

Have right thinking.

Recitation of Mantras blunts the intellect.

Sankirtan is shouting and howling.

Kirtanists are howling sects.'

OH ASPIRANTS

Do not approach such pseudo-Gurus.

How many persons can think for themselves?

You will be bewildered and puzzled.

You will be hanging in the air like Trisanku.

Do not hear their lectures.

How much spirituality and knowledge

Can you expect from such persons?

Who have neither spiritual basis

Nor realisation of any kind?

Save some intellectual acrobatic feats,

Some high sounding words and rich vocabulary of terms?

Follow the teachings of Sankara, Vyasa,

Vasishtha, Dattatreya, Lord Krishna, Valmiki.

Study Gita, Brahma Sutras.

Their teachings are suitable to all times.

All countries, all persons and all races.

OH PSEUDO-GURUS

You are not worth the dust of

The feet of these great Rishis and Seers.

Your intellect will fade away

If you are starved for a week,

If you are delirious,

If you are intoxicated!

Jnana or Supreme Wisdom is

A matter of Guru Parampara.

Goudapada Govindapada Sankara Padmapada is one line.

Matsyendranath Gorakhnath Jalendranath and Nivrittinath is another line.

Similarly Blavatsky Olcott Annie Besant Arundale Jinarajadasa.

Read the long list of Guru Parampara in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

Are you wiser than those sages?

What new ideas have you got now?

That they did not propound?

India is full of the wisdom of the sages.

You cannot cheat anyone in India.

Do not create wrong ideas in the masses.

When you say 'Do not follow any Gurus',

You intend to be the listener's Guru yourself!

Yet, you would argue against this ancient tradition! Teach now:

Tad Viddhi Pranipatena Pariprasnena Sevayaa

Upadekshyanti Te Jnanam Jnanitnah Tattwadarshinah

Learn yourself from the mouths of saints and sages.

And, spread this ancient wisdom.

Join a saint's Ashram and learn.

Don't argue against Ashrams and institutions.

Without some sort of institution you cannot live,

Nor do anything permanently good.

SHRINGA BHANGA AND MUKHA MARDANA

In Indian rhetoric, it is Shringa Bhanga to break the horns of the pride of knowledge of the opponent: it is Mukha Mardana to silence the opponent. Materialism is gradually gaining ground in the world today, influenced by science and by certain misguided rationalists, who insist on applying the proofs of sense-perception to the universe and on ignoring inconvenient truths that defy these proofs.

Read the following reply that Siva has penned to the rationalists: you will readily agree when Siva is called the Shringa Bhanga and Mukha Mardana of rationalists.

GOD EXISTS: THE PROOFS

You always feel I exist. You can never deny your existence. Can you? So, denying your existence is quite absurd and illogical. In denying your existence, you deny your own self. Existence is Brahman or your own innermost immortal Self. Though you are encaged in this finite body, though you are imperfect and mortal on account of egoism, you can think: I am infinite, perfect, immortal being. This idea of infinity can only arise from an Infinite Being. Hence, infinite or Brahman exists. This is the ontological method of proving the existence of Brahman or the Supreme.

You can deny your own self. You can deny the existence of God or Brahman. You can doubt the existence of your own Self or God. But he doubter or denier always exists. The existence of the do ibter or denier is Brahman or the Absolute.

Everything is changing in this world. There must be a substratum that is unchanging. You cannot think of a changing thing without thinking of something which is unchanging. Forms are finite. You cannot think of a finite object without thinking of something beyond, without thinking of the infinite. This is the teleological method of proving the existence of Brahman or the infinite.

In this world of phenomena, there is cause for everything. The law of cause and effect operates. There is the cause (father) for the effect (child). There is the cause seed for the effect tree. There is the cause potter for the effect pot. A branch of a tree moves. The blowing of wind or the sitting of a bird is the cause for the movement of a branch of a tree. You see this world. There must be a cause for this world, the effect. That causeless Cause is God

or the Creator. This is the cosmological method of proving the existence of Brahman or the infinite.

There are beauty, intelligent beings, luminosity, law, order, harmony in spite of apparent disorder and disharmony. There must be an omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent Being who governs and controls this vast universe. This is the theological method of proving the existence of God.

Thank You